PRE-RAPHAELITISM
AND
NOTES ON THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY, ETC

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PRE-RAPHAELITISM

AND

NOTES ON THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY, THE SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS, ETC.

By

JOHN RUSKIN

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PREFACE TO PRE-RAPHAELITISM

EIGHT years ago, in the close of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, I ventured to give the following advice to the young artists of England:

'They should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing.' Advice which, whether bad or good, involved infinite labour and humiliation in the following it, and was therefore, for the most part, rejected.

It has, however, at last been carried out, to the very letter, by a group of men who, for their reward, have been assailed with the most scurrilous abuse which I ever recollect seeing issue from the public press. I have, therefore, thought it due to them to contradict the directly false statements which have been made respecting their works; and to point out the kind of merit which, however deficient in some respects, those works possess beyond the possibility of dispute.

DENMARK HILL,
August, 1851.

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PRE-RAPHAELITISM

PRE-RAPHAELITISM

It may be proved, with much certainty, that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. It is written 'in the sweat of thy brow', but it was never written 'in the breaking of thine heart', thou shalt eat bread: and I find that, as on the one hand, infinite misery is caused by idle people, who both fail in doing what was appointed for them to do, and set in motion various springs of mischief in matters in which they should have had no concern, so on the other hand, no small misery is caused by over-worked and unhappy people, in the dark views which they necessarily take up themselves, and force upon others, of work itself. Were it not so, I believe the fact of their being unhappy is in itself a violation of divine law, and a sign of some kind of folly or sin in their way of life. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it—not a doubtful sense, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

The first thing then that he has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to

find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be very safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: 'I don't seem quite fit for a head-manager in the firm of ——— & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.' Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: 'I don't seem quite fit to be head-manager in the firm of ——— & Co., but I dare say I might do something in a small greengrocery business; I used to be a good judge of pease'; that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom: once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing every one in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes. But this kind of humility is rendered especially difficult in these days, by the contumely thrown on men in humble employments. The very removal of the massy bars which once separated one class of society from another, has rendered it tenfold more shameful in foolish people's, i. e. in most people's, eyes to remain in the lower grades of it, then ever it was before. When a man born of an artisan was looked upon as an entirely different species of animal from a man born of a noble, it made him no more uncomfortable or ashamed to remain that different species of animal, than it makes a horse ashamed to remain a horse, and not to become a giraffe. But now that a man may make money, and rise in the world, and associate himself, unreproached, with people once far above him, not only is the natural discontentedness of humanity developed to an unheard-of extent, whatever a man's position, but it becomes a veritable shame to him to remain in the state he was born in, and everybody thinks it his *duty* to try to be a 'gentleman'. Persons who have any influence in the management of public institutions for charitable education know how common this feeling has become. Hardly a day passes but they receive

letters from mothers who want all their six or eight sons to go to college, and make the grand tour in the long vacation, and who think there is something wrong in the foundations of society, because this is not possible. Out of every ten letters of this kind, nine will allege, as the reason of the writers' importunity, their desire to keep their families in such and such a 'station of life'. There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, or the moral good of the children, only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the molehill of the world—a calamity to be averted at any cost whatever, of struggle, anxiety, and shortening of life itself. I do not believe that any greater good could be achieved for the country than the change in public feeling on this head, which might be brought about by a few benevolent men, undeniably in the class of 'gentlemen', who would, on principle, enter into some of our commonest trades, and make them honourable; showing that it was possible for a man to retain his dignity, and remain, in the best sense, a gentleman, though part of his time was every day occupied in manual labour, or even in serving customers over a counter. I do not in the least see why courtesy, and gravity, and sympathy with the feelings of others, and courage, and truth, and piety, and what else goes to make up a gentleman's character, should not be found behind a counter as well as elsewhere, if they were demanded, or even hoped for, there.

Let us suppose, then, that the man's way of life and manner of work have been discreetly chosen; then the next thing to be required is, that he do not over-work himself therein. I am not going to say anything here about the various errors in our systems of society and commerce, which appear (I am not sure if they ever do more than appear) to force us to over-work ourselves merely that we may live; nor about the still more fruitful cause of unhealthy toil—the incapability,

in many men, of being content with the little that is indeed necessary to their happiness. I have only a word or two to say about one special cause of overwork—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts: hope as vain as it is pernicious; not only making men over-work themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort;* a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without* effort. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this—nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

I have said no great *intellectual* thing: for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of intense moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work—to the great fight with the Dragon—the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort. Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them: they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight: we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely, humbly understood—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; that, when it is needed

to be done, there is perhaps only one man in the world who can do it; but *he* can do it without any trouble—without more trouble, that is, than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less. And yet what truth lies more openly on the surface of all human phenomena? Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not, 'there has been a great *effort* here', but 'there has been a great *power* here?' It is not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognize in all mighty things; and that is just what we now *never* recognize, but think that we are to do great things, by help of iron bars and perspiration: alas! we shall do nothing that way but lose some pounds of our own weight.

Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favourite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: 'If I *am* anything, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labour.' This was Newton's way of talking, and I suppose it would be the general tone of men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labour in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well as by its gigantic, incommunicable facility in exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man's business whether he has genius or not: work he must, whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and

unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done false, hollow, and despicable.

Then the third thing needed was, I said, that a man should be a good judge of his work; and this chiefly that he may not be dependent upon popular opinion for the manner of doing it, but also that he may have the just encouragement of the sense of progress, and an honest consciousness of victory: how else can he become

> That awful independent on to-morrow,
> Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile.

I am persuaded that the real nourishment and help of such a feeling as this is nearly unknown to half the workmen of the present day. For whatever appearance of self-complacency there may be in their outward bearing, it is visible enough, by their feverish jealousy of each other, how little confidence they have in the sterling value of their several doings. Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up; and there is too visible distress and hopelessness in men's aspects to admit of the supposition that they have any stable support of faith in themselves.

I have stated these principles generally, because there is no branch of labour to which they do not apply: But there is one in which our ignorance or forgetfulness of them has caused an incalculable amount of suffering: and I would endeavour now to reconsider them with especial reference to it—the branch of the Arts.

In general, the men who are employed in the Arts have freely chosen their profession, and suppose themselves to have special faculty for it; yet, as a body, they are not happy men. For which this seems to me

the reason—that they are expected, and themselves expect, to make their bread *by being clever*—not by steady or quiet work ; and are, therefore, for the most part, trying to be clever, and so living in an utterly false state of mind and action.

This is the case, to the same extent, in no other profession or employment. A lawyer may indeed suspect that, unless he has more wit than those around him, he is not likely to advance in his profession ; but he will not be always thinking how he is to display his wit. He will generally understand, early in his career, that wit must be left to take care of itself, and that it is hard knowledge of law and vigorous examination and collation of the facts of every case entrusted to him, which his clients will mainly demand : this it is which he is to be paid for ; and this is healthy and measurable labour, payable by the hour. If he happen to have keen natural perception and quick wit, these will come into play in their due time and place, but he will not think of them as his chief power ; and if he have them not, he may still hope that industry and conscientiousness may enable him to rise in his profession without them. Again in the case of clergymen : that they are sorely tempted to display their eloquence or wit, none who know their own hearts will deny, but then they *know* this to *be* a temptation : they never would suppose that cleverness was all that was to be expected from them, or would sit down deliberately to write a clever sermon : even the dullest or vainest of them would throw some veil over their vanity, and pretend to some profitableness of purpose in what they did. They would not openly ask of their hearers—Did you think my sermon ingenious, or my language poetical ? They would early understand that they were not paid for being ingenious, nor called to be so, but to preach truth ; that if they happened to possess wit, eloquence, or originality, these would appear and be of service in due time, but were not to

be continually sought after or exhibited; and if it should happen that they had them not, they might still be serviceable pastors without them.

Not so with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but every one expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, every thing is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking—honesty and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter. What function? asks the reader in some surprise. He may well ask; for I suppose few painters have any idea what their function is, or even that they have any at all.

And yet surely it is not so difficult to discover. The faculties, which when a man finds in himself, he resolves to be a painter, are, I suppose, intenseness of observation and facility of imitation. The man is created an observer and an imitator; and his function is to convey knowledge to his fellow-men, of such things as cannot be taught otherwise than ocularly. For a long time this function remained a religious one: it was to impress upon the popular mind the reality of the objects of faith, and the truth of the histories of Scripture, by giving visible form to both. That function has now passed away, and none has as yet taken its place. The painter has no profession, no purpose. He is an idler on the earth, chasing the shadows of his own fancies.

But he was never meant to be this. The sudden and universal Naturalism, or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe, at the moment when the invention of printing superseded their legendary labours, was no false instinct. It was misunderstood and misapplied, but it came at the right time, and has maintained itself through all kinds of abuse; presenting, in the recent schools of landscape, perhaps only the first fruits of its power. That instinct was urging every painter in

Europe at the same moment to his true duty—*the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty existent at the period;* representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep faithful record of every monument of past ages which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change.

The instinct came, as I said, exactly at the right moment; and let the reader consider what amount and kind of general knowledge might by this time have been possessed by the nations of Europe, had their painters understood and obeyed it. Suppose that, after disciplining themselves so as to be able to draw, with unerring precision, each the particular kind of subject in which he most delighted, they had separated into two great armies of historians and naturalists;—that the first had painted with absolute faithfulness every edifice, every city, every battle-field, every scene of the slightest historical interest, precisely and completely rendering their aspect at the time; and that their companions, according to their several powers, had painted with like fidelity the plants and animals, the natural scenery, and the atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth—suppose that a faithful and complete record were now in our museums of every building destroyed by war, or time, or innovation, during these last 200 years—suppose that each recess of every mountain chain of Europe had been penetrated, and its rocks drawn with such accuracy that the geologist's diagram was no longer necessary—suppose that every tree of the forest had been drawn in its noblest aspect, every beast of the field in its savage life—that all these gatherings were already in our national galleries, and that the painters of the present day were labouring, happily and earnestly, to multiply them, and put such means of knowledge more and more within reach of the common people—would not that be a more honourable life for them, than gain-

ing precarious bread by 'bright effects?' They think not, perhaps. They think it easy, and therefore contemptible, to be truthful; they have been taught so all their lives. But it is not so, whoever taught it them. It is most difficult, and worthy of the greatest men's greatest effort, to render, as it should be rendered, the simplest of the natural features of the earth; but also be it remembered, no man is confined to the simplest; each may look out work for himself where he chooses, and it will be strange if he cannot find something hard enough for him. The excuse is, however, one of the lips only; for every painter knows, that when he draws back from the attempt to render nature as she is, it is oftener in cowardice than in disdain.

I must leave the reader to pursue this subject for himself; I have not space to suggest to him the tenth part of the advantages which would follow, both to the painter from such an understanding of his mission, and to the whole people, in the results of his labour. Consider how the man himself would be elevated; how content he would become, how earnest, how full of all accurate and noble knowledge, how free from envy—knowing creation to be infinite, feeling at once the value of what he did, and yet the nothingness. Consider the advantage to the people: the immeasurably larger interest given to art itself; the easy, pleasurable, and perfect knowledge conveyed by it, in every subject; the far greater number of men who might be healthily and profitably occupied with it as a means of livelihood; the useful direction of myriads of inferior talents, now left fading away in misery. Conceive all this, and then look around at our exhibitions, and behold the 'cattle pieces', and 'sea pieces', and 'fruit pieces', and 'family pieces'; the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers; and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been.

Take a single instance in one branch of archæology. Let those who are interested in the history of Religion consider what a treasure we should now have possessed, if, instead of painting pots, and vegetables, and drunken peasantry, the most accurate painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been set to copy, line for line, the religious and domestic sculpture on the German, Flemish, and French cathedrals and castles; and if every building destroyed in the French or in any other subsequent revolution, had thus been drawn in all its parts with the same precision with which Gerard Douw or Mieris paint basreliefs of Cupids. Consider, even now, what incalculable treasure is still left in ancient basreliefs, full of every kind of legendary interest, of subtle expression, of priceless evidence as to the character, feelings, habits, histories, of past generations, in neglected and shattered churches and domestic buildings, rapidly disappearing over the whole of Europe—treasure which, once lost, the labour of all men living cannot bring back again; and then look at the myriads of men, with skill enough, if they had but the commonest schooling, to record all this faithfully, who are making their bread by drawing dances of naked women from academy models, or idealities of chivalry fitted out with Wardour Street armour, or eternal scenes from *Gil Blas*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, or mountain sceneries with young idiots of Londoners wearing Highland bonnets and brandishing rifles in the foregrounds. Do but think of these things in the breadth of their inexpressible imbecility, and then go and stand before that broken basrelief in the southern gate of Lincoln Cathedral, and see if there is no fibre of the heart in you that will break too.

But is there to be no place left, it will be indignantly asked, for imagination and invention, for poetical power, or love of ideal beauty? Yes; the highest, the noblest place—that which these only can attain

when they are all used in the cause, and with the aid of truth. Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would give them would be the best they could receive. The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose that they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I ever have written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers—the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets?—of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labour? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could any thing come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense,

should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty, and look to heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original, manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips and chin; but partly also in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This, I say, is the kind of teaching which through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters!

But we do worse than this. Within the last few years some sense of the real tendency of such teaching has appeared in some of our younger painters. It only *could* appear in the younger ones, our older men having

become familiarized with the false system, or else having passed through it and forgotten it, not well knowing the degree of harm they had sustained. This sense appeared, among our youths—increased, matured into resolute action. Necessarily, to exist at all, it needed the support both of strong instincts and of considerable self-confidence, otherwise it must at once have been borne down by the weight of general authority and received canon law. Strong instincts are apt to make men strange, and rude; self-confidence, however well founded, to give much of what they do or say the appearance of impertinence. Look at the self-confidence of Wordsworth, stiffening every other sentence of his prefaces into defiance; there is no more of it than was needed to enable him to do his work, yet it is not a little ungraceful here and there. Suppose this stubbornness and self-trust in a youth, labouring in an art of which the executive part is confessedly to be best learnt from masters, and we shall hardly wonder that much of his work has a certain awkwardness and stiffness in it, or that he should be regarded with disfavour by many, even the most temperate, of the judges trained in the system he was breaking through, and with utter contempt and reprobation by the envious and the dull. Consider, farther, that the particular system to be overthrown was, in the present case, one of which the main characteristic was the pursuit of beauty at the expense of manliness and truth; and it will seem likely, *a priori*, that the men intended successfully to resist the influence of such a system should be endowed with little natural sense of beauty, and thus rendered dead to the temptation it presented. Summing up these conditions, there is surely little cause for surprise that pictures painted, in a temper of resistance, by exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts and positive self-trust, and with little natural perception of beauty, should not be calculated, at the first glance, to win us from works

enriched by plagiarism, polished by convention, invested with all the attractiveness of artificial grace, and recommended to our respect by established authority.

We should, however, on the other hand, have anticipated, that in proportion to the strength of character required for the effort, and to the absence of distracting sentiments, whether respect for precedent, or affection for ideal beauty, would be the energy exhibited in the pursuit of the special objects which the youths proposed to themselves, and their success in attaining them.

All this has actually been the case, but in a degree which it would have been impossible to anticipate. That two youths, of the respective ages of eighteen and twenty, should have conceived for themselves a totally independent and sincere method of study, and enthusiastically persevered in it against every kind of dissuasion and opposition, is strange enough; that in the third or fourth year of their efforts they should have produced works in many parts not inferior to the best of Albert Dürer, this is perhaps not less strange. But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised against them, the utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other—these are strangest of all—unimaginable unless they had been experienced.

And as if these were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small, slimy way. The very day after I had written my second letter to *The Times* in the defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, I received an anonymous letter respecting one of them, from some person apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a specimen of petty malignity as ever blotted paper. I think it well that the public should know this, and so get some insight into the sources of the spirit which is at work against these men

—how first roused it is difficult to say, for one would hardly have thought that mere eccentricity in young artists could have excited an hostility so determined and so cruel; hostility which hesitated at no assertion, however impudent. That of the 'absence of perspective' was one of the most curious pieces of the hue and cry which began with *The Times*, and died away in feeble maundering in the Art Union; I contradicted it in *The Times*—I here contradict it directly for the second time. There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. But if otherwise, would it have been anything remarkable in them? I doubt, if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there were one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy; I never met but with two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane, so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished among them, the author of several most valuable works, I found he actually did not know how to draw a circle in perspective. And in this state of general science our writers for the press take it upon them to tell us, that the forest-trees in Mr Hunt's *Sylvia*, and the bunches of lilies in Mr Collin's *Convent Thoughts*, are out of perspective. [1]

[1] It was not a little curious, that in the very number of the Art Union which repeated this direct falsehood about the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of 'linear perspective' (by-the-bye, the next time J. B. takes upon him to speak of any one connected with the Universities, he may as well first ascertain the difference between a Graduate and an Under-Graduate), the second plate given should have been of a picture of Bonington's—a professional landscape painter, observe—for the want of *aerial* perspective in which the Art Union itself was obliged to apologize, and in which the artist has committed nearly as many blunders in *linear* perspective as there are lines in the picture.

It might not, I think, in such circumstances, have been ungraceful or unwise in the Academicians themselves to have defended their young pupils, at least by the contradiction of statements, directly false respecting them [1], and the direction of the mind and

[1] These false statements may be reduced to three principal heads, and directly contradicted in succession.

The first, the current fallacy of society as well as of the press, was, that the Pre-Raphaelites imitated the *errors* of early painters.

A falsehood of this kind could not have obtained credence anywhere but in England, few English people, comparatively, having ever seen a picture of early Italian Masters. If they had, they would have known that the Pre-Raphaelite pictures are just as superior to the early Italian in skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and knowledge of effect, as inferior to them in grace of design; and that in a word, there is not a shadow of resemblance between the two styles. The Pre-Raphaelites imitate no pictures: they paint from nature only. But they have opposed themselves, as a body, to that kind of teaching above described, which only began after Raphael's time: and they have opposed themselves as sternly to the entire feeling of the Renaissance schools; a feeling compounded of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and shallow pride. Therefore they have called themselves Pre-Raphaelite. If they adhere to their principles, and paint nature as it is around them, with the help of modern science, with the earnestness of the men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they will, as I said, found a new and noble school in England. If their sympathies with the early artists lead them into mediævalism or Romanism, they will of course come to nothing. But I believe there is no danger of this, at least for the strongest among them. There may be some weak ones, whom the Tractarian heresies may touch; but if so, they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. I hope all things from the school.

The second falsehood was, that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well. This was asserted, and could have been asserted only by persons who had never looked at the pictures.

The third falsehood was, that they had no system of light and shade. To which it may be simply replied that their system of light and shade is exactly the same as the Sun's; which is, I believe, likely to outlast that of the Renaissance, however brilliant.

sight of the public to such real merit as they possess. If Sir Charles Eastlake, Mulready, Edwin and Charles Landseer, Cope, and Dyce would each of them simply state their own private opinion respecting their paintings, sign it, and publish it, I believe the act would be of more service to English art than any thing the Academy has done since it was founded. But as I cannot hope for this, I can only ask the public to give their pictures careful examination, and to look at them at once with the indulgence and the respect which I have endeavoured to show they deserve.

Yet let me not be misunderstood. I have adduced them only as examples of the kind of study which I would desire to see substituted for that of our modern schools, and of singular success in certain characters, finish of detail, and brilliancy of colour. What faculties, higher than imitative, may be in these men, I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will manifest themselves in due time all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe.

For it is always to be remembered that no one mind is like another, either in its powers or perceptions; and while the main principles of training must be the same for all, the result in each will be as various as the kinds of truth which each will apprehend; therefore, also, the modes of effort, even in men whose inner principles and final aims are exactly the same. Suppose, for instance, two men, equally honest, equally industrious, equally impressed with a humble desire to render some part of what they saw in nature faithfully; and, otherwise, trained in convictions such as I have above endeavoured to induce. But one of them is quiet in temperament, has a feeble memory, no invention, and excessively keen sight. The other is impatient in temperament, has a memory which nothing escapes, an invention which never rests, and is comparatively near-sighted.

Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thoughts of seizing transient effects, or giving general impressions of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the intensity of his perceptions, or the fulness of matter in his subject.

Meantime, the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad, soft masses of true gradation, and the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aerial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind for ever; not a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thoughts. Not only so, but thousands and thousands of such images, of older scenes, remain congregated in his mind, each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him, and these again confused with other images of his own ceaseless, sleepless imagination, flashing by in sudden troops. Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable shorthand:—as for his sitting down to 'draw from Nature', there was not one of the things which

he wished to represent, that stayed for so much as five seconds together: but none of them escaped, for all that: they are sealed up in that strange storehouse of his; he may take one of them out perhaps, this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room, far away. Now, observe, you may tell both of these men, when they are young, that they are to be honest, that they have an important function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

I have supposed the feebleness of sight in the last, and of invention in the first painter, that the contrast between them might be more striking; but, with very slight modification, both the characters are real. Grant to the first considerable inventive power, with exquisite sense of colour; and give to the second, in addition to all his other faculties, the eye of an eagle; and the first is John Everett Millais, the second Joseph Mallard William Turner.

They are among the few men who have defied all false teaching, and have therefore, in great measure, done justice to the gifts with which they were intrusted. They stand at opposite poles, marking culmininating points of art in both directions; between them, or in various relations to them, we may class five or six more living artists who, in like manner, have done justice to their powers. I trust that I may be pardoned for naming them, in order that the reader may know how the strong innate genius in each has been invariably accompanied with the same humility, earnestness, and industry in study.

It is hardly necessary to point out the earnestness or humility in the works of William Hunt; but it may be so to suggest the high value they possess as records of English rural life, and *still* life. Who is there who for a moment could contend with him in the

unaffected, yet humorous truth with which he has painted our peasant children? Who is there who does not sympathize with him in the simple love with which he dwells on the brightness and bloom of our summer fruit and flowers? And yet there is something to be regretted concerning him: why should he be allowed continually to paint the same bunches of hot-house grapes, and supply to the Water Colour Society a succession of pineapples with the regularity of a Covent Garden fruiterer? He has of late discovered that primrose banks are lovely, but there are other things grow wild besides primroses: what undreamt-of loveliness might he not bring back to us, if he would lose himself for a summer in Highland foregrounds; if he would paint the heather as it grows, and the foxglove and the harebell as they nestle in the clefts of the rocks, and the mosses and bright lichens of the rocks themselves. And then, cross to the Jura, and bring back a piece of Jura pasture in spring; with the gentians in their earliest blue, and a soldanelle beside the fading snow! And return again, and paint a grey wall of alpine crag, with budding roses crowning it like a wreath of rubies. That is what he was meant to do in this world; not to paint bouquets in China vases.

I have in various other places expressed my sincere respect for the works of Samuel Prout: his shortness of sight has necessarily prevented their possessing delicacy of finish or fulness of minor detail; but I think that those of no other living artist furnish an example so striking of innate and special instinct, sent to do a particular work at the exact and only period when it was possible. At the instant when peace had been established all over Europe, but when neither national character nor national architecture had as yet been seriously changed by promiscuous intercourse or modern 'improvement'; when, however, nearly every ancient and beautiful building had been long left

in a state of comparative neglect, so that its aspect of partial ruinousness, and of separation from recent active life, gave to every edifice a peculiar interest—half sorrowful, half sublime; at that moment Prout was trained among the rough rocks and simple cottages of Cornwall, until his eye was accustomed to follow with delight the rents and breaks, and irregularities which, to another man, would have been offensive; and then, gifted with infinite readiness in composition, but also with infinite affection for the kind of subjects he had to portray, he was sent to preserve, in an almost innumerable series of drawings, *every one made on the spot*, the aspect borne, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by cities which, in a few years more, re-kindled wars, or unexpected prosperities, were to ravage, or renovate, into nothingness.

It seems strange to pass from Prout to John Lewis; but there is this fellowship between them, that both seem to have been intended to appreciate the characters of foreign countries more than of their own, nay, to have been born in England chiefly that the excitement of strangeness might enhance to them the interest of the scenes they had to represent. I believe John Lewis to have done more entire justice to all his powers (and they are magnificent ones) than any other man amongst us. His mission was evidently to portray the comparatively animal life of the southern and eastern families of mankind. For this, he was prepared in a somewht singular way—by being led to study, and endowed with altogether peculiar apprehension of, the most sublime characters of animals themselves. Rubens, Rembrandt, Snyders, Tintoret, and Titian, have all, in various ways, drawn wild beasts magnificently; but they have in some sort humanized or demonized them, making them either ravenous fiends, or educated beasts, that would draw cars, and had respect for hermits. The sudden isolation of the brutal nature; the dignity and quietness of the mighty

limbs; the shaggy mountainous power, mingled with grace as of a flowing stream; the stealthy restraint of strength and wrath in every soundless motion of the gigantic frame; all this seems never to have been seen, much less drawn, until Lewis drew and himself engraved a series of animal subjects, now many years ago. Since then, he has devoted himself to the portraiture of those European and Asiatic races among whom the refinements of civilization exist without its laws or its energies, and in whom the fierceness, indolence, and subtlety of animal nature are associated with brilliant imagination and strong affections. To this task he has brought not only intense perception of the kind of character, but powers of artistical composition like those of the great Venetians, displaying, at the same time, a refinement of drawing almost miraculous, and appreciable only, as the minutiæ of nature itself are appreciable, by the help of the microscope. The value, therefore, of his works, as records of the aspect of the scenery and inhabitants of the south of Spain and of the East, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is quite above all estimate.

I hardly know how to speak of Mulready: in delicacy and completion of drawing, and splendour of colour, he takes place beside John Lewis and the Pre-Raphaelites; but he has, throughout his career, displayed no definiteness in choice of subject. He must be named among the painters who have studied with industry, and have made themselves great by doing so; but having obtained a consummate method of execution, he has thrown it away on subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation. 'The Cherry Woman', exhibited in 1850, may be named as an example of the first kind; the 'Burchell and Sophia' of the second (the character of Sir William Thornhill being utterly missed); the 'Seven Ages' of the third; for this subject cannot be painted. In the written

passage, the thoughts are progressive and connected; in the picture they must be co-existent, and yet separate; nor can all the characters of the ages be rendered in painting at all. One may represent the soldier at the cannon's mouth, but one cannot paint the 'bubble reputation' which he seeks. Mulready, therefore, while he has always produced exquisite pieces of painting, has failed in doing anything which can be of true or extensive use. He has, indeed, understood how to discipline his genius, but never how to direct it.

Edwin Landseer is the last painter but one whom I shall name: I need not point out to any one acquainted with his earlier works, the labour, or watchfulness of nature which they involve, nor need I do more than allude to the peculiar faculties of his mind. It will at once be granted that the highest merits of his pictures are throughout found in those parts of them which are least like what had before been accomplished; and that it was not by the study of Raphael that he attained his eminent success, but by a healthy love of Scotch terriers.

None of these painters, however, it will be answered, afford examples of the rise of the highest imaginative power out of close study of matters of fact. Be it remembered, however, that the imaginative power, in its magnificence, is not to be found every day. Lewis has it in no mean degree, but we cannot hope to find it at its highest more than once in an age. We *have* had it once, and must be content.

Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed W. Turner [1]. There was nothing, however, in them at

[1] He did not use his full signature, J. M. W., until about the year 1800.

all indicative of genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

During that period the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colours of nature into a harmony of which the key-notes are greyish green and brown; pure blues, and delicate golden yellows being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light: and bright local colours in extremely small quantity in figures or other minor accessaries.

Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *colour* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed with the hand; but the use of two, three, or four colours, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of colour, any more than the brown engravings of the *Liber Studiorum*; nor would

the idea of colour be in general more present to the artist's mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself this advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual colour of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in nature have been cold grey, but it will be drawn nevertheless of a rich brown, because it is in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze; but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool grey, because it is in the distance.

This at least was the general theory—carried out with great severity in many, both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of colour, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress: the conventional, easily manageable colour, was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in all art—that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them, was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and, therefore, not only permissible, but even necessary, while more brilliant or varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind for an instant from his principal object. And, therefore, it will be generally found in the works of this period, that exactly in proportion to the importance and general toil of the composition, is the severity of the tint; and that the play of colour begins to show

itself first in slight and small drawings, where he felt that he could easily secure all that he wanted in form.

Thus the 'Crossing the Brook' and such other elaborate and large compositions are actually painted in nothing but grey, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local colour in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated colour occur not unfrequently in easy places; and even before the year 1800 he begins to introduce it with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies, just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit or other dangerous luxury to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft pencilling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colourless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-colour or gold; while, whenever the hues of nature in anywise fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigour, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear, Cairngorm-like pools, and the usual serenity of his aerial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some High-

land lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

The system of his colour being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his colour is simple; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him: we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farmyard; and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses; Cuyp, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes (as he has himself divided them in the *Liber Studiorum*), no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal 'gentlemen's seats', I suppose drawings commissioned by the owners; then lowland pastoral scenery of every kind, including nearly all farming operations—ploughing, harrowing, hedging and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life—courtyards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, housebuildings, fairs, elections, etc.; then all kinds of inner domestic

life—interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn, round the whole coast of England;—pilchard fishing at St Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance—one of the Victory after the battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the Death of Nelson, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealized into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes and Carthages and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures—nymphs, monsters, and spectres; heroes and divinities [1].

What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can possibly pervade all this? This, the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite—a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakspeare comparable with it. A soldier's wife resting by the roadside is not beneath it; Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carry away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

This is the root of the man's greatness; and it

[1] I shall give a *catalogue raisonnée* of all this in the third volume of *Modern Painters*.

follows as a matter of course that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the characters of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed. The man who can best feel the difference between rudeness and tenderness in humanity, perceives also more difference between the branches of an oak and a willow than any one else would; and, therefore, necessarily the most striking character of the drawings themselves is the speciality of whatever they represent—the thorough stiffness of what is stiff, and grace of what is graceful, and vastness of what is vast; but through and beyond all this, the condition of the mind of the painter himself is easily enough discoverable by comparison of a large number of the drawings. It is singularly serene and peaceful: in itself quite passionless, though entering with ease into the external passion which it contemplates. By the effort of its will it sympathizes with tumult or distress, even in their extremes, but there is no tumult, no sorrow in itself, only a chastened and exquisitely peaceful cheerfulness, deeply meditative; touched, without loss of its own perfect balance, by sadness on the one side, and stooping to playfulness upon the other. I shall never cease to regret the destruction, by fire, now several years ago, of a drawing which always seemed to me to be the perfect image of the painter's mind at this period—the drawing of Brignal Church near Rokeby, of which a feeble idea may still be gathered from the engraving (in the Yorkshire series). The spectator stands on the 'Brignal banks' looking down into the glen at twilight; the sky is still full of soft rays, though the sun is gone, and the Greta glances brightly in the valley, singing its even-song; two white clouds, following each other, move without wind through the hollows of the ravine, and others lie couched on the far away moorlands; every leaf of the woods is still in the delicate air; a boy's kite, incapable of rising, has become entangled

in their branches, he is climbing to recover it; and just behind it in the picture, almost indicated by it, the lowly church is seen in its secluded field between the rocks and the stream; and around it the low churchyard wall, and the few white stones which mark the resting places of those who can climb the rocks no more, nor hear the river sing as it passes.

There are many other existing drawings which indicate the same character of mind, though I think none so touching or so beautiful: yet they are not, as I said above, more numerous than those which express his sympathy with sublimer or more active scenes; but they are almost always marked by a tenderness of execution, and have a look of being beloved in every part of them, which shows them to be the truest expression of his own feelings.

One other characteristic of his mind at this period remains to be noticed—its reverence for talent in others. Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they were the laws of nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great text-book of nature itself. Turner thus studied almost every preceding landscape painter, chiefly Claude, Poussin, Vandevelde, Loutherbourg, and Wilson. It was probably by the Sir George Beaumonts and other feeble conventionalists of the period, that he was persuaded to devote his attention to the works of these men; and his having done so will be thought, a few scores of years hence, evidence of perhaps the greatest modesty ever shown by a man of original power. Modesty at once admirable and unfortunate, for the study of the works of Vandevelde and Claude was productive of unmixed mischief to him: he spoiled many of his marine pictures, as for instance Lord Ellesmere's, by imitation of the former; and from the latter learned a false ideal,

which, confirmed by the notions of Greek art prevalent in London in the beginning of this century, has manifested itself in many vulgarities in his composition pictures, vulgarities which may perhaps be best expressed by the general term 'Twickenham Classicism', as consisting principally in conceptions of ancient or of rural life such as have influenced the erection of most of our suburban villas. From Nicolo Poussin and Loutherbourg he seems to have derived advantage; perhaps also from Wilson; and much in his subsequent travels from far higher men, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese. I have myself heard him speaking with singular delight of the putting in of the beech leaves in the upper right-hand corner of Titian's 'Peter Martyr'. I cannot in any of his works trace the slightest influence of Salvator; and I am not surprised at it, for though Salvator was a man of far higher powers than either Vandevelde or Claude, he was a wilful and gross caricaturist. Turner would condescend to be helped by feeble men, but could not be corrupted by false men. Besides, he had never himself seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as competent authority for it. But he *had* seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them.

One of the most characteristic drawings of this period fortunately bears a date, 1818, and brings us within two years of another dated drawing, no less characteristic of what I shall henceforward call Turner's Second period. It is in the possession of Mr Hawkesworth Fawkes of Farnley, one of Turner's earliest and truest friends; and bears the inscription, unusually conspicuous, heaving itself up and down over the eminences of the foreground: 'PASSAGE OF MONT CENIS. J. M. W. TURNER, January 15th, 1820.'

The scene is on the summit of the pass close to the hospice, or what seems to have been a hospice at that

time—I do not remember any such at present—a small square-built house, built as if partly for a fortress, with a detached flight of stone steps in front of it, and a kind of drawbridge to the door. This building, about 400 or 500 yards off, is seen in a dim, ashy grey against the light, which by help of a violent blast of mountain wind has broken through the depth of clouds which hangs upon the crags. There is no sky, properly so called, nothing but this roof of drifting cloud; but neither is there any weight of darkness—the high air is too thin for it—all savage, howling, and luminous with cold, the massy bases of the granite hills jutting out here and there grimly through the snow wreaths. There is a desolate-looking refuge on the left, with its number 16, marked on it in long ghastly figures, and the wind is drifting the snow off the roof and through its window in a frantic whirl; the near ground is all wan with half-thawed, half-trampled snow; a diligence in front, whose horses, unable to face the wind, have turned right round with fright, its passengers struggling to escape, jammed in the window; a little farther on is another carriage off the road, some figures pushing at its wheels, and its driver at the horses' heads, pulling and lashing with all his strength, his lifted arm stretched out against the light of the distance, though too far off for the whip to be seen.

Now I am perfectly certain that any one thoroughly accustomed to the earlier works of the painter, and shown this picture for the first time, would be struck by two altogether new characters in it.

The first, a seeming enjoyment of the excitement of the scene, totally different from the contemplative philosophy with which it would formerly have been regarded. Every incident of motion and of energy is seized upon with indescribable delight, and every line of the composition animated with a force and fury which are now no longer the mere expression of a con-

templated external truth, but have origin in some inherent feeling in the painter's mind.

The second, that although the subject is one in itself almost incapable of colour, and although, in order to increase the wildness of the impression, all brilliant local colour has been refused even where it might easily have been introduced, as in the figures; yet in the low minor key which has been chosen, the melodies of colour have been elaborated to the utmost possible pitch, so as to become a leading, instead of a subordinate, element in the composition; the subdued warm hues of the granite promontories, the dull stone colour of the walls of the buildings, clearly opposed, even in shade, to the grey of the snow wreaths heaped against them, and the faint greens and ghastly blues of the glacier ice, being all expressed with delicacies of transition utterly unexampled in any previous drawings.

These, accordingly, are the chief characteristics of the works of Turner's second period, as distinguished from the first—a new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of Colour, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design.

Not that it is impossible, or even unusual, to find drawings of serene subject, and perfectly quiet feeling, among the compositions of this period; but the repose is in them, just as the energy and tumult were in the earlier period, an external quality, which the painter images by an effort of the will: it is no longer a character inherent in himself. The 'Ulleswater', in the England series, is one of those which are in most perfect peace; in the 'Cowes', the silence is only broken by the dash of the boat's oars, and in the 'Alnwick' by a stag drinking; but in at least nine drawings out of ten, either sky, water, or figures are in rapid motion, and the grandest drawings are almost always those which have even violent action

in one or other, or in all; e. g. high force of Tees, Coventry, Llanthony, Salisbury, Llanberis, and such others.

The colour is, however, a more absolute distinction; and we must return to Mr Fawkes's collection in order to see how the change in it was effected. That such a change would take place at one time or other was of course to be securely anticipated, the conventional system of the first period being, as above stated, merely a means of study. But the immediate cause was the journey of the year 1820. As might be guessed from the legend on the drawing above described, 'Passage of Mont Cenis, January 15th, 1820', that drawing represents what happened on the day in question to the painter himself. He passed the Alps then in the winter of 1820; and either in the previous or subsequent summer, but on the same journey, he made a series of sketches on the Rhine, in body colour, now in Mr Fawkes's collection. Every one of those sketches is the almost instantaneous record of an *effect* of colour or atmosphere, taken strictly from nature, the drawing and the details of every subject being comparatively subordinate, and the colour nearly as principal as the light and shade had been before—certainly the leading feature, though the light and shade are always exquisitely harmonized with it. And naturally, as the colour becomes the leading object, those times of day are chosen in which it is most lovely; and whereas before, at least five out of six of Turner's drawings represented ordinary daylight, we now find his attention directed constantly to the evening: and, for the first time, we have those rosy lights upon the hills, those gorgeous falls of sun through flaming heavens, those solemn twilights, with the blue moon rising as the western sky grows dim, which have ever since been the themes of his mightiest thoughts.

I have no doubt, that the *immediate* reason of this change was the impression made upon him by the

colours of the continental skies. When he first travelled on the Continent (1800), he was comparatively a young student; not yet able to draw form as he wanted, he was forced to give all his thoughts and strength to this primary object. But now he was free to receive other impressions; the time was come for perfecting his art, and the first sunset which he saw on the Rhine taught him that all previous landscape art was vain and valueless, that in comparison with natural colour, the things that had been called paintings were mere ink and charcoal, and that all precedent and all authority must be cast away at once, and trodden under foot. He cast them away: the memories of Vandevelde and Claude were at once weeded out of the great mind they had encumbered; they and all the rubbish of the schools together with them; the waves of the Rhine swept them away for ever; and a new dawn rose over the rocks of the Siebengebirge.

There was another motive at work, which rendered the change still more complete. His fellow artists were already conscious enough of his superior power in drawing, and their best hope was, that he might not be able to colour. They had begun to express this hope loudly enough for it to reach his ears. The engraver of one of his most important marine pictures told me, not long ago, that one day about the period in question, Turner came into his room to examine the progress of the plate, not having seen his own picture for several months. It was one of his dark early pictures, but in the foreground was a little piece of luxury, a pearly fish wrought into hues like those of an opal. He stood before the picture for some moments; then laughed, and pointed joyously to the fish: 'They say that Turner can't colour!' and turned away.

Under the force of these various impulses the change was total. *Every subject thenceforward was primarily*

conceived in colour ; and no engraving ever gave the slightest idea of any drawing of this period.

The artists who had any perception of the truth were in despair ; the Beaumontites, classicalists, and 'owl species' in general, in as much indignation as their dulness was capable of. They had deliberately closed their eyes to all nature, and had gone on inquiring 'Where do you put your brown "tree"'. A vast revelation was made to them at once, enough to have dazzled any one ; but to *them*, light unendurable as incomprehensible. They 'did to the moon complain', in one vociferous, unanimous, continuous 'Tu whoo'. Shrieking rose from all dark places at the same instant, just the same kind of shrieking that is now raised against the Pre-Raphaelites. Those glorious old *Arabian Nights*, how true they are ! Mocking and whispering, and abuse loud and low by turns, from all the black stones beside the road, when one living soul is toiling up the hill to get the golden water. Mocking and whispering, that he may look back, and become a black stone like themselves.

Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with his fingers in his ears. He retired into himself ; he could look no longer for help, or counsel, or sympathy from any one ; and the spirit of defiance in which he was forced to labour led him sometimes into violences, from which the slightest expression of sympathy would have saved him. The new energy that was upon him, and the utter isolation into which he was driven, were both alike dangerous, and many drawings of the time show the evil effects of both ; some of them being hasty, wild, or experimental, and others little more than magnificent expressions of defiance of public opinion.

But all have this noble virtue—they are in everything his own : there are no more reminiscences of dead masters, no more trials of skill in the manner of Claude

or Poussin; every faculty of his soul is fixed upon nature only, as he saw her, or as he remembered her.

I have spoken above of his gigantic memory: it is especially necessary to notice this, in order that we may understand the kind of grasp which a man of real imagination takes of all things that are once brought within his reach—grasp thenceforth not to be relaxed for ever.

On looking over any catalogues of his works, or of particular series of them, we shall notice the recurrence of the same subject two, three, or even many times. In any other artist this would be nothing remarkable. Probably most modern landscape painters multiply a favourite subject twenty, thirty, or sixty fold, putting the shadows and the clouds in different places, and 'inventing', as they are pleased to call it, a new 'effect' every time. But if we examine the successions of Turner's subjects, we shall find them either the records of a succession of impressions actually received by him at some favourite locality, or else repetitions of one impression received in early youth, and again and again realized as his increasing powers enabled him to do better justice to it. In either case we shall find them records of *seen facts*; *never* compositions in his room to fill up a favourite outline.

For instance, every traveller—at least every traveller of thirty years' standing—must love Calais, the place where he first felt himself in a strange world. Turner evidently loved it excessively. I have never catalogued his studies of Calais, but I remember, at this moment, five: there is first the 'Pas de Calais', a very large oil painting, which is what he saw in broad daylight as he crossed over, when he got near the French side. It is a careful study of French fishing boats running for the shore before the wind, with the picturesque old city in the distance. Then there is the 'Calais Harbour' in the *Liber Studiorum*: that is what he saw just as he was going into the harbour—

a heavy brig warping out, and very likely to get in his way or run against the pier, and bad weather coming on. Then there is the 'Calais Pier', a large painting, engraved some years ago by Mr Lupton [1]; that is what he saw when he had landed, and ran back directly to the pier to see what had become of the brig. The weather had got still worse, the fishwomen were being blown about in a distressful manner on the pier head, and some more fishing boats were running in with all speed. Then there is the 'Fortrouge', Calais: that is what he saw after he had been home to Dessein's, and dined, and went out again in the evening to walk on the sands, the tide being down. He had never seen such a waste of sands before, and it made an impression on him. The shrimp girls were all scattered over them too, and moved about in white spots on the wild shore; and the storm had lulled a little, and there was a sunset—such a sunset—and the bars of Fortrouge seen against it, skeleton-wise. He did not paint that directly; thought over it—painted it a long while afterwards.

Then there is the vignette in the illustrations to Scott. That is what he saw as he was going home, meditatively; and the revolving lighthouse came blazing out upon him suddenly, and disturbed him. He did not like that so much; made a vignette of it, however, when he was asked to do a bit of Calais, twenty or thirty years afterwards, having already done all the rest.

Turner never told me all this, but any one may see it if he will compare the pictures. They might, possibly, not be impressions of a single day, but of two days or three; though in all human probability they were seen just as I have stated them [2]; but they *are* records of successive impressions, as plainly

[1] The plate was, however, never published.

[2] And the more probably because Turner was never fond of staying long at any place, and was least of all likely to

written as ever traveller's diary. All of them pure veracities. Therefore immortal.

I could multiply these series almost indefinitely from the rest of his works. What is curious, some of them have a kind of private mark running through all the subjects. Thus I know three drawings of Scarborough, and all of them have a starfish in the foreground : I do not remember any others of his marine subjects which have a starfish.

The other kind of repetition—the recurrence to one early impression—is however still more remarkable. In the collection of F. H. Bale, Esq., there is a small drawing of Llanthony Abbey. It is in his boyish manner, its date probably about 1795 ; evidently a sketch from nature, finished at home. It had been a showery day ; the hills were partially concealed by the rain, and gleams of sunshine breaking out at intervals. A man was fishing in the mountain stream. The young Turner sought a place of some shelter under the bushes ; made his sketch, took great pains when he got home to imitate the rain, as he best could ; added his child's luxury of a rainbow ; put in the very bush under which he had taken shelter, and the fisherman, a somewhat ill-jointed and long-legged fisherman, in the courtly short breeches which were the fashion of the time.

Some thirty years afterwards, with all his powers in their strongest training, and after the total change in his feelings and principles which I have endeavoured to describe, he undertook the series of 'England and Wales', and in that series introduced the subject of Llanthony Abbey. And behold, he went back to his boy's sketch and boy's thought. He kept the very bushes in their places, but brought the fisherman to the other side of the river, and put him, in somewhat less courtly dress, under their shelter, instead of him-

make a pause of two or three days at the beginning of his ourney.

self. And then he set all his gained strength and new knowledge at work on the well-remembered shower of rain, that had fallen thirty years before, to do it better. The resultant drawing [1] is one of the very noblest of his second period.

Another of the drawings of the England series, Ullswater, is the repetition of one in Mr Fawkes's collection, which, by the method of its execution, I should conjecture to have been executed about the year 1808 or 1810: at all events, it is a very quiet drawing of the first period. The lake is quite calm; the western hills in grey shadow, the eastern massed in light. Helvellyn rising like a mist between them, all being mirrored in the calm water. Some thin and slightly evanescent cows are standing in the shallow water in front; a boat floats motionless about a hundred yards from the shore: the foreground is of broken rocks, with some lovely pieces of copse on the right and left.

This was evidently Turner's record of a quiet evening by the shore of Ulleswater, but it was a feeble one. He could not at that time render the sunset colours: he went back to it therefore in the England series, and painted it again with his new power. The same hills are there, the same shadows, the same cows—they had stood in his mind, on the same spot, for twenty years—the same boat, the same rocks, only the copse is cut away—it interfered with the masses of his colour. Some figures are introduced bathing, and what was grey and feeble gold in the first drawing, becomes purple, and burning rose-colour in the last.

But perhaps one of the most curious examples is in the series of subjects from Winchelsea. That in the *Liber Studiorum*, 'Winchelsea, Sussex', bears date 1812, and its figures consist of a soldier speaking to a woman, who is resting on the bank beside the road. There is another small subject, with Winchelsea in the distance, of which the engraving bears date 1817.

[1] Vide *Modern Painters*, Part II, Sect. III, Chap. IV, §14

It has *two* women with bundles, and *two* soldiers toiling along the embankment in the plain, and a baggage waggon in the distance. Neither of these seems to have satisfied him, and at last he did another for the England series, of which the engraving bears date 1830. There is now a regiment on the march; the baggage waggon is there, having got no farther on in the thirteen years, but one of the women is tired, and has fainted on the bank; another is supporting her against her bundle, and giving her drink; a third sympathetic woman is added, and the two soldiers have stopped, and one is drinking from his canteen.

Nor is it merely of entire scenes, or of particular incidents that Turner's memory is thus tenacious. The slightest passages of colour or arrangement that have pleased him—the fork of a bough, the casting of a shadow, the fracture of a stone—will be taken up again and again, and strangely worked into new relations with other thoughts. There is a single sketch from nature in one of the portfolios at Farnley, of a common wood-walk on the estate, which has furnished passages to no fewer than three of the most elaborate compositions in the *Liber Studiorum*.

I am thus tedious in dwelling on Turner's powers of memory, because I wish it to be thoroughly seen how all his greatness, all his infinite luxuriance of invention, depends on his taking possession of everything that he sees—on his grasping all, and losing hold of nothing—on his forgetting himself, and forgetting nothing else. I wish it to be understood how every great man paints what he sees or did see, his greatness being indeed little else than his intense sense of fact. And thus Pre-Raphaelitism and Raphaelitism, and Turnerism are all one and the same, so far as education can influence them. They are different in their choice, different in their faculties, but all the same in this, that Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who preceded or followed him

who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man's own mind, not as he had been taught to see them, except by the God who made both him and them.

There is, however, one more characteristic of Turner's second period, on which I have still to dwell, especially with reference to what has been above advanced respecting the fallacy of overtoil; namely, the magnificent ease with which all is done when it is *successfully* done. For there are one or two drawings of this time which are *not* done easily. Turner had in these set himself to do a fine thing to exhibit his powers; in the common phrase, to excel himself; so sure as he does this, the work is a failure. The worst drawings that have ever come from his hands are some of this second period, on which he has spent much time and laborious thought; drawings filled with incident from one side to the other, with skies stippled into morbid blue, and warm lights set against them in violent contrast; one of Bamborough Castle, a large water-colour, may be named as an example. But the truly noble works are those in which, without effort, he has expressed his thoughts as they came, and forgotten himself; and in these the outpouring of invention is not less miraculous than the swiftness and obedience of the mighty hand that expresses it. Any one who examines the drawings may see the evidence of this facility, in the strange freshness and sharpness of every touch of colour; but when the multitude of delicate touches, with which all the aerial tones are worked, is taken into consideration, it would still appear impossible that the drawing could have been completed with *ease*, unless we had direct evidence on the matter: fortunately, it is not wanting. There is a drawing in Mr Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores: it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about sixteen inches by eleven: it does not appear one of

the most highly finished, but is still farther removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator, seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her portholes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed; there are two other ships of the line in the middle distance, drawn with equal precision; a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot.

Let this single fact be quietly meditated upon by our ordinary painters, and they will see the truth of what was above asserted—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; and let them not torment themselves with twisting of compositions this way and that, and repeating, and experimenting, and scene-shifting. If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept in most of my works, on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not 'teaching people how to arrange masses'; for not 'attributing sufficient importance to composition'. Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do—so much importance that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a *Divina Commedia*, or *King Lear*, as how to 'compose', in the true sense, a single building or

picture. The marvellous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that what they call 'principles of composition' are mere principles of common sense in everything, as well as in pictures and buildings—A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in anything else—no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was everything, and so cover our academy walls with Shacabac feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered, but the dishes empty.

It is not, however, only in invention that men overwork themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence of failing in portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so long upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any more to obey the heart. And, besides this, there are certain qualities of drawing which they miss from over-carefulness. For, let them be assured, there is a great truth lurking in that common desire of men to see things done in what they call a 'masterly' or 'bold' or 'broad' manner: a truth oppressed and abused, like almost every other in this world, but an eternal one nevertheless; and whatever mischief may

have followed from men's looking for nothing else but this facility of execution, and supposing that a picture was assuredly all right if only it were done with broad dashes of the brush, still the truth remains the same: that because it is not intended that men shall torment or weary themselves with any earthly labour, it is appointed that the noblest results should only be attainable by a certain ease and decision of manipulation. I only wish people understood this much of sculpture, as well as of painting, and could see that the finely finished statue is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a far more vulgar work than that which shows rough signs of the right hand laid to the workman's hammer: but at all events, in painting it is felt by all men, and justly felt. The freedom of the lines of nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them; there are curves in the flow of the hair, and in the form of the features, and in the muscular outline of the body, which can in no wise be caught but by a sympathetic freedom in the stroke of the pencil. I do not care what example is taken, be it the most subtle and careful work of Leonardo himself, there will be found a play and power and ease in the outlines, which no *slow* effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.

These then are the principal lessons which we have to learn from Turner, in his second or central period of labour. There is one more, however, to be received; and that is a warning; for towards the close of it, what with doing small conventional vignettes for publishers, making showy drawings from sketches taken by other people of places he had never seen, and touching up the bad engravings from his works submitted

to him almost every day—engravings utterly destitute of animation, and which had to be raised into a specious brilliancy by scratching them over with white, spotty, lights, he gradually got inured to many conventionalities, and even falsities ; and, having trusted for ten or twelve years almost entirely to his memory and invention, living I believe mostly in London, and receiving a new sensation only from the burning of the Houses of Parliament, he painted many pictures between 1830 and 1840 altogether unworthy of him. But he was not thus to close his career.

In the summer either of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was then at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps ; (the source of the Arveron, in Mr Fawkes's collection, which could not have been painted till he had seen the thing itself, bears date 1800) and the direction of his journey in 1840 marks his fond memory of that earliest one ; for, if we look over the Swiss studies and drawings executed in his first period, we shall be struck by his fondness for the pass of the St Gothard ; the most elaborate drawing in the Farnley collection is one of the Lake of Lucerne from Fluelen ; and, counting the *Liber Studiorum* subjects, there are, to my knowledge, six compositions taken at the same period from the pass of St Gothard, and, probably, several others are in existence. The valleys of Sallenche and Chamouni, and Lake of Geneva, are the only other Swiss scenes which seem to have made very profound impressions on him.

He returned in 1841 to Lucerne ; walked up Mont Pilate on foot, crossed the St Gothard, and returned by Lausanne and Geneva. He made a large number of coloured sketches on this journey, and realized several of them on his return. The drawings thus produced are different from all that had preceded them, and are the first which belong definitely to what I shall henceforward call his Third period.

The perfect repose of his youth had returned to his mind, while the faculties of imagination and execution appeared in renewed strength ; all conventionality being done away by the force of the impression which he had received from the Alps, after his long separation from them. The drawings are marked by a peculiar largeness and simplicity of thought : most of them by deep serenity, passing into melancholy ; all by richness of colour, such as he had never before conceived. They, and the works done in following years, bear the same relation to those of the rest of his life that the colours of sunset do to those of the day ; and will be recognized, in a few years more, as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect.

Such has been the career of the greatest painter of this century. Many a century may pass away before there rises such another ; but what greatness any among us may be capable of, will, at least, be best attained by following in his path ; by beginning in all quietness and hopefulness to use whatever powers we may possess to represent the things around us as we see and feel them ; trusting to the close of life to give the perfect crown to the course of its labours, and knowing assuredly that the determination of the degree in which watchfulness is to be exalted into invention, rests with a higher will than our own. And, if not greatness, at least a certain good, is thus to be achieved ; for though I have above spoken of the mission of the more humble artist, as if it were merely to be subservient to that of the antiquarian or the man of science, there is an ulterior aspect, in which it is not subservient, but superior. Every archæologist, every natural philosopher, knows that there is a peculiar rigidity of mind brought on by long devotion to logical and analytical inquiries. Weak men, giving themselves to such studies, are utterly hardened by them, and become incapable of understanding any thing nobler, or even of feeling the value of the results to which they lead.

But even the best men are in a sort injured by them, and pay a definite price, as in most other matters, for definite advantages. They gain a peculiar strength, but lose in tenderness, elasticity, and impressibility. The man who has gone, hammer in hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are adorned in the mind of the passing traveller. In his more informed conception, they arrange themselves like a dissected model: where another man would be awe-struck by the magnificence of the precipice, he sees nothing but the emergence of a fossiliferous rock, familiarized already to his imagination as extending in a shallow stratum, over a perhaps uninteresting district; where the unlearned spectator would be touched with strong emotion by the aspect of the snowy summits which rise in the distance, he sees only the culminating points of a metamorphic formation, with an uncomfortable web of fan-like fissures radiating, in his imagination, through their centres.[1] That in the grasp he has obtained of the inner relations of all these things to the universe, and to man, that in the views which have been opened to him of natural energies such as no human mind would have ventured to con-

[1] This state of mind appears to have been the only one which Wordsworth had been able to discern in men of science; and in disdain of which, he wrote that short-sighted passage in *The Excursion*, Book III, ll. 165–90, which is, I think, the only one in the whole range of his works which his true friends would have desired to see blotted out. What else has been found fault with as feeble or superfluous, is not so in the intense distinctive relief which it gives to his character. But these lines are written in mere ignorance of the matter they treat; in mere want of sympathy with the men they describe: for, observe, though the passage is put into the mouth of the Solitary, it is fully confirmed, and even rendered more scornful, by the speech which follows.

ceive, and of past states of being, each in some new way bearing witness to the unity of purpose and everlastingly consistent providence of the Maker of all things, he has received reward well worthy the sacrifice, I would not for an instant deny; but the sense of the loss is not less painful to him if his mind be rightly constituted; and it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect; should make them dazzling with the splendour of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity; should restore to the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe the naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death.

THE END

NOTES ON SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES EXHIBITED IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY

No. I: 1855

PREFACE

I AM often asked by my friends to mark for them the pictures in the Exhibitions of the year which appear to me the most interesting, either in their good qualities, or their failure. I have determined, at last, to place the circular letter which on such occasions I am obliged to write, within reach of the general public. Twenty years of severe labour, devoted exclusively to the study of the principles of Art, have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence; but it will be found that in the following pages, few statements are made on my own authority, and that I have limited myself to pointing out simple facts with respect to each picture, leaving to the reader the power of verifying such statements for himself. No criticism is of any value which does not enable the spectator, in his own person, to understand, or to detect, the alleged merit or unworthiness of the picture; and the true work of a critic is not to make his hearer believe him, but agree with him.

Whatever may be their abstract truth, the following remarks have at least in them the virtue of *entire* impartiality. Among the painters whose works are spoken of, the greater number are absolutely unknown to me; some are my friends; and some quite other than friends. But the reader would be strangely deceived who, from the tone of the criticism, should endeavour to guess to which class the painter belonged. It might, indeed, be alleged, that there is some unfairness in fastening on the faults of one or two works, not grosser in error than many around

them; but it would have been tedious to expose all the fallacies in the Academy, and I believe it will be found, besides, that the notice of the particular picture is nearly always justified, if not by excess of demerit, at least by excess of pretension.

I have been hindered, by unforeseen pressure of work, from noticing, this year, any but pictures in the Academy; and have perhaps missed several there which ought to have been favourably distinguished; but I hope henceforward, to furnish, every year, in the same form, some notes on the leading pictures in all the Exhibitions, which may be of use in guiding the public to the discernment and acceptance of those unobtrusive truths of which our modern Idealism has so long repressed the pursuit, and withheld the appreciation.

May 29, 1855.

NOTES

No. 35. Flowers. (Miss A. F. Mutrie).

There are two other works by this artist in the rooms, Nos. 304. and 306. It would be well to examine them at once in succession, lest they should afterwards be passed carelessly when the mind has been interested by pictures of higher aim; for all these flower paintings are remarkable for very lovely, pure, and yet unobtrusive colour—perfectly tender, and yet luscious—(note the purple rose leaves especially), and a richness of petal texture that seems absolutely scented. The arrangement is always graceful—the backgrounds sometimes too faint. I wish this very accomplished artist would paint some banks of flowers in wild country, just as they grow, as she appears slightly in danger of falling into too artificial methods of grouping.

68. El Paseo, the property of Her Majesty the Queen. (J. Philip.)

76. Mrs. Coleridge. (W. Boxall.)

The juxtaposition of these two pictures looks very like deliberate malice; but it may read an excellent lesson to the two artists. Mr. Philip's fault is excess of decision and force; Mr. Boxall's, excess of delicacy and tenderness. Mr. Philip's work, by the contrast, has become vulgar, and Mr. Boxall's, evanescent.

Looked at separately, there is much merit in both paintings; but the truth, so painfully brought out, is still a truth with respect to both. Mr. Philip has much to subdue, and much to refine, before he will be able to represent not merely the piquancy, but the way-

ward, half melancholy mystery of Spanish beauty; and Mr. Boxall has much to complete, much to *define*, before he can hope that his graceful idea of the English lady will be in anywise justly expressed. The same may be said of all his works in this exhibition. Refined in expression, though in some cases looking too stiffly straightforward, the faces he paints are still little more than shadows—the reflection of the truth in a cloudy mirror. The dresses are even less than this; in fact nothing more than a filling of the canvas with vague sweeps of the brush, issuing, when there is any momentary distinctness, in pure fallacy; as in the portrait before us, where the shadow of the chain on the neck, which, to accord with the faintness of the rest of the drawing, should have been so tender as hardly to be perceived, is nearly as black as the chain itself—and this equally on the flesh tint, and on the white dress!

Mr. Boxall will never satisfy himself, nor do his real talents justice, until he is content to paint, unaffectedly, as far as he is able, things as they are. It is not time nor labour that is wanting: there are as many touches on this ghostly gown as there are on one of Velasquez's portraits, head and all, which looks living enough to stalk the next moment into the middle of the room.

77. Colin. (J. C. Hook, A.)

There is a sweet feeling in this choice of landscape subject, as in most of the other works of this painter. The execution is flimsy and imperfect, and must be much bettered before his pictures can rank as works of any importance. He has, however, a very interesting figure-subject in the middle room, of which more in its place.

78. The Wrestling in 'As you like it.' (D. Maclise, R.A.)

Very bad pictures may be divided into two principal classes—those which are weakly or passively bad, and which are to be pitied and passed by; and those which are energetically or actively bad, and which demand severe reprobation, as wilful transgressions of the laws of all good art. The picture before us is of the last class. Mr. Maclise has keen sight, a steady hand, good anatomical knowledge of the human form, and good experience of the ways of the world. If he draws ill, or imagines ungracefully, it is because he is resolved to do so. He has seen enough of society to know how a Duke generally sits—how a young lady generally looks at a strange youth who interests her; and it is by vulgar choice, not vulgar ignorance, that he makes the enthroned Duke straddle like a village actor, and the young lady express her interest by a cool, unrestrained and steady stare. It is not worth while to analyse the picture thoroughly, but let us glance at the two opponent figures—Charles and Orlando. The spectator can certainly see nothing in this 'Charles' but a grim, sinister, sinewy monster, wholly devoid of all gentleness or humanity. Was Shakespeare's Charles such an one? So far from it, that into his mouth is put the first description of the love of Rosalind and Celia—'The Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her—never two ladies loved as they do.' So far from it, that he comes to Oliver especially to warn him against allowing his brother to wrestle with him. 'Your brother is but young and tender; for your love, I would be loth to foil him.' Then, on Oliver's execrable slander of Orlando, poor honest Charles is 'heartily glad I came hither; if he come to-morrow, I'll give him his payment;' this being not in cruelty, but in honest indignation at Orlando's ascribed villainy; nevertheless, when the trial comes, although flushed with victory, and haughty in his supposed strength,

there is no bitterness in his question—'Where is this young gallant?' Poor Charles is as much slandered here by the painter as Orlando was by his brother. Well, but what of Orlando himself? He folds his hands, and turns up his eyes like a lover in his last appeal to his lady's mercy. What was the actual fact? Orlando had been but that instant called before the princesses; he had never seen them before in his life. He is a man of firm, calm, and gloomy character—the sadness having been induced by injustice; he has no hope, no thought of Rosalind or her love, at this moment; he has challenged the wrestler in quiet resolve to try with him the strength of his youth—little caring what comes of it. He answers the princesses with deep and grateful courtesy, but with a despairing carelessness of his fate—'If I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me—the world no injury, for in it I have nothing.' Imagine the calmness and steady melancholy of the man who would speak thus, and then compare the sentimental grimace (as of a fashionable tenor in a favourite aria) of the Orlando in the picture.

Next to pass from imagination of character, to realization of detail. Mr. Maclise is supposed to draw well, and realize minute features accurately. Now, the fact is, that this work has every fault usually attributed to the pre-Raphaelites, without one of their excellences. The details are all so sharp and hard that the patterns on the dresses force the eye away from the faces; and the leaves on the boughs call to us to count them. But not only are they all drawn distinctly, they are all drawn *wrong*.

Take a single instance in a simple thing. On the part of the hem of the Duke's robe, which crosses his right leg, are seven circular golden ornaments, and two halves, Mr. Maclise being evidently unable to draw

them as *turning* away *round* the side of the dress. Now observe, wherever there is a depression or fold in the dress, those circles ought to contract into narrow upright ovals. There *is* such a depression at the first next the half one on the left, and that circle ought to have become narrowed. Instead of which it actually widens itself! The second is right. Then the third, reaching the turn to the shade, and all those beyond it, ought to have been in narrowed perspective—but they all remain full circles! And so throughout the ornament. Imagine the errors which a draughtsman who could make such a childish mistake as this must commit in matters that really need refined drawing, turns of leaves, and so on!

But to pass from drawing to light and shade. Observe, the light falls from the left, on all the figures, but that of the two on the extreme left. These two, for the sake of effect, are in 'accidental shadow'. Good; but why then has Oliver, in the brown, a sharp light on the left side of his nose! and on his brown mantle? Reflected lights, says the apologist. From what? Not from the red Charles, who is five paces at least in advance of Oliver; and if from the golden dress of the courtier, how comes it that the nearer and brighter golden dress of the Duke casts *no reflected light* whatever on the yellow furs and red hose of the wrestler, infinitely more susceptible of such a reflex than the dress of Oliver?

It would be perfectly easy to analyse the whole picture in this manner; but I pass to a pleasanter subject of examination.

90. An Armenian Lady. (J. F. Lewis.)

It is very instructive to pass immediately from Maclise's work to this. Both propose the complete rendering of details; but with Maclise all is inherently wrong; here everything is exquisitely, ineffably right. I say *ineffably*—for no words are strong enough to

express the admirable skill and tenderness of pencilling and perception shown in this picture. It is one of the first that I have seen by this master in oil, and I am rejoiced to find it quite equal in precision and purity to his best work in water colour, while it is in a safer medium. The delicacy of the drawing of the palm in the distance—of the undulating perspective of the zigzags on the dress, and of the deep and fanciful local colouring of the vase, are all equally admirable. The face—infinitely laboured—fails slightly. The flesh tint is too blue—a fault into which the master has lately fallen from trying to reach impossible delicacy.

It is only to be regretted that this costly labour should be spent on a subject devoid of interest.

94. The River's Bank. (T. Creswick, R.A.)

This, like most other of the landscapes hung on the line, is one of those works so characteristic of the English school, and so little creditable to them, in which everything is carelessly or ill painted—because it is in a landscape. Nothing is really *done*. The cows have imperfect horns and hides; the girl has an imperfect face, and imperfect hands; the trees have imperfect leaves; the sky imperfect clouds; the water imperfect waves. The colour, of a heavy yellow with dim green, is worse than imperfect; for colour must either be right —that is, infinitely beautiful; or wrong—that is, *less* than beautiful. All tame and dead colour is *false* colour.

120. Beatrice. (C. L. Eastlake, P.R.A.)

An imitation of the Venetians, on the supposition that the essence of Venetian painting consisted in method: Issuing, as trusts in Method instead of Fact always must issue,—in mere negation. Sir Charles Eastlake has power of rendering expression, if he would watch it in human beings—and power of drawing form, if he would look at the form to be drawn. But when, because Giorgione and Titian draw broadly, and some-

times make their colours look broken, he supposes that all he has to do is to get a broken breadth; he ends, as all imitators must end, in a rich inheritance of the errors of his original, without its virtues. Titian and Giorgione have a slight tendency to flatness; but Giorgione's G Flat has accompaniments, Sir Charles's C. Flat stands alone.

The real source of the error may be sufficiently seen in the distance; Titian paints his distances in pure colour—but at least indicates what is grass, and what is stone. The distant ground, here, with its white spot for a castle, is a mere space of dim brownish-green paint, which can by no possibility stand for grass, or moss, or any other natural thing. It seems to me however, that there are some points in the execution of the picture, considered as an example of certain textures, which are instructive. The whole is careful, and the draperies well cast. But who is the lady? Dante's Beatrice, or Benedict's? She can hardly be either: her face indicates little piety, and less wit.

121. Flitting Shadows. (H. Jutsum.)

Not particularly remarkable; but good as an instance of tolerably clear and firm drawing. The clouds and ferns are both exceedingly well articulated.

136. 'Come, rest in this bosom,' etc. (A. Egg.)

Mr. Egg has considerable power of expression, and though this subject of prison sentiment is both painful, useless, and hacknied, he appears to have something like serious purpose in his work. But he will never be a great painter until he has a greater respect for plain truth. There is in this picture one of the most wonderful fallacies that ever painter ventured. Observe the shadows of the bars of the window. They fall with intense sharpness on the wall at the back of the bed. Now, to get there, the sun must have come *in* at the window; it did not get through the keyhole.

And as it came in at the window, it must have cast the first portions of those shadows *from the ends of the bars themselves.* But, actually, at the bars there are no shadows at all! It is dim daylight, shadowless, at the window itself. Hot sunshine, ten feet within the prison! The state of mind in which a painter could firmly carry out such a fallacy is wholly adverse to all real progress.

It is better to walk at once into the next room, in order to examine the more important work by this artist, *The Life and Death of Buckingham*, No. 349. The story is worth telling, and there is vigorous painting in both pictures; but the figures which surround Buckingham in his riot are not of the class which could have entertained a man either of wit or breeding. Vice, unhappily, is not always repulsive at first sight, and the Tempter has not usually his bargain quite so cheap as he would have had of the Duke on such terms. The head of the dying Buckingham is forcible, but quite unfinished.

141. The Mitherless Bairn. (T. Faed.)

The story is well told, and the figure of the orphan child very affecting. But the painting is throughout the most common-place Wilkieism—white spots everywhere. I expected far higher things from this painter, whose work eight years ago was more modest and powerful than it is now.

142. Dutch Boats. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

A fair example of Stanfield; but I never understand, in the accepted types of marine painting, why there is no distinction between the Foam and the Water. In the sea there is either yeasty foam or smooth surface; but in all marine paintings the waves are merely touched upon with little oblong strokes of white, which express neither water nor spray. Observe those in this picture at the boat's bow.

149. Lear recovering his reason at the sight of Cordelia. (J. R. Herbert, R.A.)

As No. 78 furnished us with an instance of the class of picture which is Actively bad, we have here an equally important instance of the Passively bad; which, had it been in a less prominent place, might kindly have been passed without notice; but, since it is thus recommended to the public by its position, it must needs be examined.

In the whole compass of Shakespeare's conceptions, the two women whom he has gifted with the deepest souls are Cordelia and Virgilia. All his other women can speak what is in them. These two cannot. The 'Nothing, my lord,' of Cordelia, and the 'gracious silence' of Virgilia, are the everlasting seals set by the Master of the human heart upon the most sacred writing of its folded and golden leaves. Shakespeare himself could not find words to tell what was in these women. And now, cast down at her father's feet, the alabaster vase is broken—the house of life is filled with the odour of the ointment—all Cordelia is poured forth in that infinite 'I am' of fulfilled love.[1] Do but think of it for one quiet instant. Think of the rejected creature, so long disallowed from daughter's word and act; unsistered also—all her sisterhood changed into pale flame of indignation—now at last, in consummation of all sorrow, and pity, and shame, and thankfulness, and horror, and hope long delayed, watching the veil grow thin, that in those eyes, wasted with grief, was still drawn between her father's soul and hers. Think of it! As for imagining it—perhaps Dante might have imagined it, with the winds of paradise yet upon his brow. As for painting it——

And yet, in the midst of the Royal Academy Rooms

[1] 'I think this lady
To be my child, Cordelia.
Cordelia. And so I am; *I am.*'

of England, and in the midst of the nineteenth century, that profile of firwood, painted buff, with a white spot in the corner of the eye, does verily profess to be a painting of it.

It is a thing not a little to be pondered upon, that the men who attempt these highest things are always those who cannot even do the least things well. Around the brow of this firwood figure there is a coronet, and in the coronet four jewels. I thought that, according to Royal Academy principles, in a 'High Art' picture, this Rundell and Bridge portion of it should have been a little less conspicuous. However, as we find these unideal emeralds and rubies thus condescendingly touched, let us see *how* they are touched. Each stone has a white spot, or high light, upon it. Now, that flash is always the reflection of the highest light to which the jewel is turned; and here, in a tent, it must be of an opening in the tent on the left-hand side. Now, as the jewels are set round the brow, each in a different position, each would reflect this tent door from a different spot of its surface. This change in the position of the reflection would be one of the principal means by which nature would indicate the curve of the coronet. Now, look at the painting. Every gem has actually the high light in the same spot, on the left-hand side, all round the brow!

The dimness of pictorial capacity indicated by such a blunder as this is very marvellous. For a painter of the slightest power, even though he had not drawn the gems from nature, would infallibly have varied the flash, for his own pleasure, and in an instinctive fulfilment of the eternal law of change.

It is nevertheless a fact that, although from some peculiar idiosyncrasy not comprehending the passage in King Lear, Mr. Herbert has feeling; and if he would limit his work to subjects of the more symbolic and quietly religious class, which truly move him, and would consider himself by no means a great master, but a

very incipient student, and paint everything from the fact and life, faithfully, he would be able to produce works of some value.

159. Sir Robert Harry Inglis. (G. Richmond.)

A very interesting portrait of a good man by a good painter. The attitude, as characteristic of Sir Robert, is admirably chosen; but the face, though it has all the gentleness, has hardly the vivacity, of Sir Robert's look of welcome. The chief fault of this portrait is the mistiness of the accessories on the right hand. I am sorry to see Mr. Richmond countenancing the false, though of late Parliamentary, persuasion, that every statesman's proper element is Fog; and it was a poor compliment, both to Sir Robert Inglis and to himself, to suppose that the portrait would not be sufficiently interesting, unless he subdued the collateral interest of the joint-stool.

161. Royal Prisoners. 1650. (C. W. Cope, R.A.)

A very beautiful and well-chosen subject, not ill painted. The spectator will see it to better advantage, if with his hand he will hide the guard's helmet, which projects into the light like the beak of a canoe, and appears, for a moment, to be the principal subject.

181. Christabel. (W. Dyce, R.A.)

An example of one of the false branches of pre-Raphaelitism, consisting in imitation of the old religious masters. This head is founded chiefly on reminiscence of Sandro Botticelli. The ivy leaves at the side are as elaborate as in the true school, but are quite false in both colour and shade. There is some sweet expression in the face.

199. A Church Door. (J. D. Luard.)

A faithful little study, very refreshing among the artificialnesses with which it is surrounded.

201. Penserosa. (C. W. Cope, R.A.)

The young lady appears to be reading, may possibly be thinking, is certainly passing under a Norman arch, and is very pretty. This *ensemble* is interesting, but had better have been put into the architectural room, as it may materially promote the erection of Norman arches in the gardens of the metropolis, for the better performance of pensive appearances to morning visitors.

228. In Betchworth Park. (W. F. Witherington, R.A.)

240. The Bird Keeper. (R. Redgrave, R.A.)

We have here two interesting examples of another fallacious condition of landscape—that which pretends to pre-Raphaelite distinctness of detail; but is in all detail, industriously wrong. In Creswick's work the touches represent nothing; here they represent perpetual error, assuming that all leaves of trees may be represented by oval, sharp-pointed touches of yellow or green,—as if leaves had not their perspectives, shadows, and changes of hue, like everything else! There is great appearance of fidelity to nature in these works, but there is none in reality; they are mere mechanical accumulations of similar touches, as a sempstress mechanically accumulates similar stitches. If the spectator desires to know the difference between right and wrong in this matter, let him first examine Mr. Witherington's oval touches, and then cross the room to No. 321, in which the flowers in the window are truly and properly painted, and look at the way the leaves are set and worked there; and if it be supposed that this is only to be done in a cabinet picture, the question is well worth settling at once by merely walking out of the Academy into the National Gallery next door, and looking at the leaves which crown the Bacchus, and the little dancing faun, in Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne, in which every turn of the most subtle perspective,

and ever gradation of colour, is given with the colossal ease and power of the consummate master. Examine further, the vine-leaves above on the right, and the flowers in the foreground, and you will return to the Academy with an eye so instructed, as hardly thenceforward to accept, in such matters, fallacies for facts.

239. The Broken Window. (W. H. Knight.)

This picture does not catch the eye at a distance, but, on looking close, there will be found exquisite and careful painting in it. The fish on the tray on the boy's head are amongst the best bits of cabinet painting in the room.

244. The Moorland. (J. W. Inchbold.)

This is, as far as I have seen, the only thoroughly good landscape in the rooms of the Academy. It is more exquisite in its finish of lichenous rock painting than any work I have ever seen. Its colour, throughout, is as forcible as it is subtle and refined; and although it appears as yet to display little power of invention, the appreciation of truth in it is so intense, that a single inch of it is well worth all the rest of the landscapes in the room. It may well be supposed that my knowledge of this picture was not obtained by study of it in its present position. Those who happen to be interested in the system of hanging now pursued in the Academy, will do well to verify my statement by an examination of the picture after the Exhibition closes.

There are two other works by this artist, in the outer rooms; 1075, ineffective, but yet full of excellent work and right feeling; and 1162, exceedingly beautiful.

282. The Rescue. (J. E. Millais, A.)

It is the only *great* picture exhibited this year; but this is *very* great. The immortal element is in it to the full. It is easily understood, and the public very

generally understand it. Various small cavils have been made at it, chiefly by conventionalists, who never ask how the thing is, but fancy for themselves how it ought to be. I have heard it said, for instance, that the fireman's arm should not have looked so black in the red light. If people would only try the experiment, they would find that near black, compared with other colours, is always black. Coals do not look red in fire, but where they are red hot. In fact, the contrast between any dark colour and a light one is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on both. Paul Veronese often paints local colour darker in the lights than in the shadow, generally equal in both. The glow that is mixed with the blackness is here intensely strong; but, justly, does not destroy the nature of the blackness.

The execution of the picture is remarkably bold—in some respects imperfect. I have heard it was hastily finished; but, except in the face of the child kissing the mother, it could not be much bettered. For there is a true sympathy between the impetuousness of execution and the haste of the action.

305. At the Opera. (W. P. Frith, R.A.)

There is great cleverness and successful realization, up to a certain point, in this picture, the work being very thoroughly done, as far as the painter sees what *is* to be done, and all very skilfully handled, down to the utmost seam of the white kid gloves. It is not a kind of painting which will ever bring great fame, or deserve it; but it is better than spurious 'High Art'.

321. The Writing Lesson. (J. Collinson.)

This is a very careful and beautiful study—the subject not interesting enough to render the picture attractive; but it is a good piece of work throughout, and there are not many pictures in the room of which this can be said.

355. A Contrast. (A. Solomon.)

It is difficult to see this picture at the height at which it is placed, but it seems to me better than most of its class in the rooms; and the face of the invalid is very beautiful.

357. Scottish Presbyterians. (J. Stirling.)

A very noticeable picture, showing careful study, and good discrimination of expression. But the painter cannot yet do all he wants to do; he should try to work more delicately, and not attempt so much at once.

471. Fowl and Pigeons. (W. Huggins.)

There is excellent painting in pieces of this study; but as a whole it is incomplete, the background being wrong, and the parts out of harmony. The painter ought to work with the sternest self-denial, from corner to corner of his picture, completing everything from nature, near or distant, to the best of his power.

236. The Mother of Moses. (J. C. Hook, A.)

I alluded to this picture in noticing the landscape works by the same artist. This is very truly and thoughtfully conceived. It is interesting to consider how many 'findings of Moses' have been painted, not one of which ever attempted to express this, the deepest note of passion in all the scene. The princess and her maidens pleasantly surprised at finding a child among the reeds! this was all that the so-called great masters ever dreamed of. The modern painter is to be deeply thanked for his true and earnest thought; above all for the little Miriam, trotting by her mother's side with her rough harp, and pitcher hung by it, looking back, in her childish wisdom and fear, to see that the princess is not watching the burst of passion which might betray her mother.

545. St. Sebastian. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

A careful and good example of Stanfield's work. But persons who accuse the pre-Raphaelites of faults in aerial perspective, may perhaps be able to account, better than I can, for the fact that the foreground, and the hill three miles off, are precisely of the same colour.

569. Cimabue's Madonna carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence. (F. Leighton.)

This is a very important and very beautiful picture. It has both sincerity and grace, and is painted on the purest principles of Venetian art—that is to say, on the calm acceptance of the whole of nature, small and great, as, in its place, deserving of faithful rendering. The great secret of the Venetians was their simplicity. They were great colourists, not because they had peculiar secrets about oil and colour, but because when they saw a thing red, they painted it red; and when they saw it blue, they painted it blue; and when they saw it distinctly, they painted it distinctly. In all Paul Veronese's pictures, the lace borders of the table-cloths or fringes of the dresses are painted with just as much care as the faces of the principal figures; and the reader may rest assured that in all great art it is so. Everything in it is done as well as it *can* be done. Thus, in the picture before us, in the background is the Church of San Miniato, strictly accurate in every detail; on the top of the wall are oleanders and pinks, as carefully painted as the church; the architecture of the shrine on the wall is well studied from thirteenth-century Gothic, and painted with as much care as the pinks; the dresses of the figures, very beautifully designed, are painted with as much care as the architecture; and the face with as much care as the dresses: that is to say, all things, throughout, with as much care as the painter could bestow. It necessarily follows, that what is most difficult (i.e. the faces) should be com-

paratively the worst done. But if they are done as well as the painter could do them, it is all we have to ask; and modern artists are under a wonderful mistake in thinking that when they have painted faces ill, they make their picture more valuable by painting the dresses worse.

The painting before us has been objected to, because it seems broken up into bits. Precisely the same objection would hold, and in very nearly the same degree, against the best works of the Venetians. All faithful colourists' work, in figure-painting, has a look of sharp separation between part and part. I will not detain the reader by explaining *why* this is so, but he may convince himself of the fact by one walk through the Louvre, comparing the Venetian pictures in this respect with those of all other schools. Although, however, in common with all other works of its class, it is marked by these sharp divisions, there is no confusion in its arrangement. The principal figure is nobly principal, not by extraordinary light, but by its own pure whiteness; and both the master and the young Giotto attract full regard by distinction of form and face. The features of the boy are carefully studied, and are indeed what, from the existing portraits of him, we know those of Giotto must have been in his youth. The head of the young girl who wears the garland of blue flowers is also very sweetly conceived.

Such are the chief merits of the picture. Its defect is, that the equal care given to the whole of it, is not yet *care enough*. I am aware of no instance of a young painter, who was to be really great, who did not in his youth paint with intense effort and delicacy of finish. The handling here is much too broad; and the faces are, in many instances, out of drawing, and very opaque and feeble in colour. Nor have they, in general, the dignity of the countenance of the thirteenth century. The Dante especially is ill conceived—far too haughty, and in no wise noble or thoughtful. It seems to me

probable that Mr. Leighton has greatness in him, but there is no absolute proof of it in this picture; and if he does not, in succeeding years, paint far better, he will soon lose his power of painting so well.

594. Rome. (D. Roberts, R.A.)

This is a large architectural diagram, with the outlines executed sharply in black, the upper half being then painted brick-red, and the lower green-grey. (Note the distinctness of the mannerism in the *outlined* statues and pillars of the chapel in shade upon the right.) I can hardly understand how any man, devoting his time to painting, ever comes to suppose that a picture can be right which is painted in two colours! or by what reasoning he persuades himself that, because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, the white stucco of house walls, the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage, may all be of the same colour. Imagine a painting of a beautiful blue-eyed female face, by sunset, which represented its blue eyes, its nose, its cheeks, and its lips, all of the same brick-red!

Mr. Roberts was once in the habit of painting carefully finished cabinet pictures, which were well composed (in the common sense), and fairly executed in the details. Had he continued these, painting more and more, instead of less and less, from nature, he might by this time have been a serviceable painter. Is it altogether too late to warn him that he is fast becoming nothing more than an Academician?

636. Trout Stream in Wales. (J. Dearle.)

Mr. Dearle's painting, considered as mere laying of colour, is perhaps better than that of any of the landscapists whose works are low enough to be visible, but his drawing of foliage is mannered and false. These trees are far more like moss than trees. He appears also to be confining himself to one kind of scene—an

indolent habit, which can end in nothing but mediocrity. His river scene last year was good, for once; a duplicate of it is too much.

1334. The Good Harvest. (C. A. Collins).

There is much careful painting in this little study, and it was a wicked thing to put it into a room in which, while its modest subject could draw no attention, its good painting was of necessity utterly invisible.

1359. Dressing for the First Party. (A. C. Chisholme.)

A very spirited picture, the best in execution (of its school) in the rooms.

1405. The 'London Gazette' 1854. (F. B. Barwell.)

The Academy is of course filled with pictures of this kind of subject. This is, I think, the most earnest. It seems to be the only one which takes grief out of the drawing-room, and conceives it as independent of miniatures by Sir William Ross.

There are several other pictures in the rooms respecting which I should have been glad to say a few words; but I have no time to pursue the subject further, and must here leave the reader to his own investigations, only expressing my regret that absence from London prevents, for the present, my seeing a picture, of which a friend, in whose judgment I have great confidence speaks with unusual enthusiasm,—No. 514. Early Spring Evening. (W. Davis.) My friend says it contains the 'unity of perfect truth with invention'. I cannot answer for its doing this, which would place it in the first rank of works of art; but, as it is hung in a place where it is not easily caught sight of, I have little doubt it must be a work of merit.

Some surprise has been expressed to me by friends at the small number of pictures marked in the preceding Notes, as if, in passing by the others, I had intended to convey an impression of their being beneath criticism. I do not think that of all the pictures on the walls there are more than six or seven beneath criticism; but I do think that those which above are mentioned with praise are, on the whole, the best in the rooms, and that those which are blamed are fair examples of the worst: one or two omissions, made accidentally, in a somewhat hurried review, it is better, perhaps, thus late, than in nowise, to repair.

Of these the only one I seriously regretted was of the 'Elgiva', by Miss J. M. Boyce (No. 1295). The expression in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen,—by a stranger —without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and on-look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment—the beautiful imagination of faint but pure colour, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise. Complete achievement there is not in it as yet, chiefly because the colours, quite exquisitely conceived and arranged, are not each in their own separate quality perfect, in the sense in which any given colour by Bonifazio or Giorgione is perfect; but if this artist, looking always to nature and her own thoughts for the thing to be expressed, will strive to express them, with some memory of the great Venetians in her treatment of each separate hue, it seems to me that she might entertain the hope of taking place in the very first rank of painters.

Two pictures I passed intentionally without remark, not because they were unimportant, but because they seemed to me to unite good and bad qualities in a man-

ner so curiously entangled, that no short criticism could clearly separate the one from the other—I mean Mr. Dobson's 'Alms'-deeds of Dorcas' (379), and Mr. Sant's 'Eda' (638). Of these the first has certainly some high qualities, but seems to me singularly wanting in pictorial delightfulness: it looks like the work of a man of good feeling, and considerable industry, who had been forced to learn to paint against his will, and did it in many respects well, but without pleasure. The second, 'Eda,' shows, as do all Mr. Sant's works, very high pictorial power, more or less lost in the cold conventionality of modern colour, or non-colour. Surely Mr. Sant must admire Reynolds! why does he not aim at Reynolds's pitch and character of hue? Very certainly he admires children,—does he really think that this pretty little lady's cheeks have as much of the peach, and as little of the mortal clay, in them, as he sees in the sunned cheek of living childhood? There is much throughout this picture to be admired, but also much to be regretted; and I cannot, without too long detention of the reader, accurately mark the gradations of respect or regret.

In the work commended to me by my friend—Mr. Davis's 'Spring Evening' (514), I am disappointed. It is unfair to judge of it in its present position, but it appears to me merely good pre-Raphaelite work, certainly showing no evidence whatever of inventive power, and perhaps less tact than usual in choice of subject; but it is assuredly superior to any of the landscapes hung on the line.

There are also many promising and meritorious studies of landscape, such as Mr. Dearmer's 'Magpie Island' (665), scattered about the rooms, in positions variously inconspicuous: but these I do not particularly name, as until a picture possesses some qualities of *colour*, it is not, in the proper sense, a picture at all; and studies of simple green effects are to be considered merely as materials for future work of higher

order. Many of these studies, however, would have won some admiration and sympathy for the young artists, if they had been placed where they could have been in any wise justly seen; and in reprobation of the treatment they have for the most part received, it would be well to remember,—glancing once more at Mr. Leighton's picture of Giotto and Cimabue,—those noble lines of Mrs. Browning, in 'Casa Guidi windows,' beginning—

> 'I hold, too,
> That Cimabue smiled upon the lad
> At the first stroke which passed what *he* could do;
> Or else his Virgin's smile had never had
> Such sweetness in 't.'

And now in conclusion, I have only to notice and answer an attempted defence, by one of the daily papers, of some of the pictures blamed in the above Notes. It is not indeed my usual practice to read, still less to answer, the remarks of journalists on what I write. Their public duty compels them to criticise at an hour's notice what I have taken years to consider; and it cannot be a matter of wonder that, under such circumstances, they should often misunderstand, and sometimes misrepresent me. The error and the distortion may in general be left to the correction of time; but as these Notes are intended expressly for the use of readers who have little time to spare, I will meet with as much reply as may be necessary every endeavour on the part of the journalists to invalidate their authority. Hitherto I have noticed but one effort of the kind, namely, that in the *Globe* of June 18.

It is above said of Mr. Roberts' picture, that the reasoning must be strange which persuaded its artist, 'that because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, and the white stucco of house walls—the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage might all be of the same colour.'

The *Globe* replies:—That in 'Modern Painters' I

said,—'local colour, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light.' I did so. I said much more than this. If the writer had searched a little further, he might have found the following passage, infinitely more to his purpose: 'I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind, every *particle of green colour being absolutely annihilated*.' I said this, and said it most truly; but I never said that the leaves were, under such circumstances, *of the same colour, as the trunks*, or as the palace tiles, or as the house walls. The light which will turn green to brownish russet, turns blue to purple, white to pale rose, scarlet to a burning flame-colour, far above all possible imitation, and brown to scarlet,—every colour retaining its due relation, in paleness or darkness, to every other; while all the shadows, down to the minutest angle of a stone, retaining the local colours unaltered by the light, and doubly brought out by opposition, fill the intervals and interstices of the warm effect with the most marvellous pieces of the purest blue, green, or grey. A thousand different hues ought to have been seen in every inch of that glowing light, before it could have been right; and the notable misfortune of the picture is, that where there *is* the slightest variation, it is always on the wrong side. Thus, in the principal tower on the right, the tiles, which were naturally red, and ought now to have been of intensest vermilion, are actually, though a little darker, less *red* than the wall below; and the paler buildings (Castle of St. Angelo, etc.), beyond the river, are less affected by the red light than the sprays of the stone pine! while the reflection in the river—which the writer in the *Globe* instances as an introduction of a third colour—is the broadest fallacy in the whole work: it is brighter than the sky above it, instead of being, as a reflection always is, a little darker; and what makes the matter worse is,

that the river, seen from above in that position, could not have reflected the pale sky at the horizon at all, but only the dark sky some distance above.

I deeply regret having been forced to speak again of this picture, because (to much of private feeling it may be permitted me to confess) I have great personal regard for Mr. Roberts; but it may be well to state at once, that whenever I blame a painting, I do so as gently as is consistent with just explanation of its *principal* defects. I never say half of what I could in its disfavour; and it will hereafter be found, that when once I have felt it my duty to attack a picture, the worst policy which the friends of the artist can possibly adopt will be to defend it.

The next passage which the *Globe* endeavours to invalidate is that in which I said, respecting 'The Rescue',—'The contrast between any dark colour and a light one is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on *both*'; against which the *Globe* quotes my statement in 'Modern Painters':—'Light and shade so completely conquer the distinctions of local colour, that the difference of hue between the illumined parts of a white and black object is not so great as the difference, in sunshine, between the illumined and dark side of either separately.'

Will the writer for the *Globe* be so good as to point out the contradiction? This last passage, indeed, says:—'Light and *shade* conquer distinctions of local colour.' It does not say that *light* alone does. In the first passage I say: 'Raise white a certain height, and raise black as far, and still they are at the same distance from each other; or, in other terms, raise 6 to 12, and 0 to 6, and they are still 6 apart.' In the second passage I say: 'That this difference, whatever it may at any moment be, is not so great as the difference between the full light and full shadow of a given colour in sunshine.'

Of course this does not mean dim sunshine, or that

dark sides may not by reflected light become nearly as bright as light sides; but it expresses, in few words, this most important and stern fact, that, while the resources of art always easily equal the most violent distinctions of local colours or patterns, they are utterly inadequate to express the depths of gradation between full sunshine and full shadow in any given colour—so that Albert Dürer, and all the great masters of form, are compelled to leave all local colour as pure *white*, in order to get the gradations between it and the shadow. In Albert Dürer's best plate, the 'Adam and Eve,'—highly finished as it is,—the green leaves are represented as pure white, in order to get them even approximately raised above the shadow; and even then, half of the intermediate gradations are missed.

The great colourists always chose, of course, to give the other side of the scale of truth. They gave the local colours truly, and sank or subdued the gradations of shadow—Veronese giving the type of the perfect statement of local colour, Tintoret striking the exact balance between him and the Chiaroscurists, and Rembrandt representing as much as was possible of the truth of the opposite scale.

Millais is a great colourist, and, of course, works on the principles of the colourists. The question respecting his picture, is one respecting the distinctions of local colour, and that question I have simply and sufficiently answered; nor would any one have been embarrassed by the answer who had ever seen a coal fire, unless the unfortunate writer for the *Globe* had done his best to communicate to them the infection of his misunderstanding. The press does good service in many things, but it is a wonderful instrument for the dissemination of imbecility; and there is this mischief in the nature of things, very prettily illustrated by the subject we are upon of local colour, that dulness, like local blackness, 'is always black, however high you raise the light that falls upon it'; but as all whiteness may

entirely cease to be white in the night, so there is no perspicuity which a resolute bluntness cannot obscure.

Thus much of answer may suffice touching what the writer for the *Globe* ventures to assert on his own responsibility; but his mention of Mr. Leslie obliges me to say a few words respecting this artist, which I had intended to reserve for another place, and another time.

There has perhaps never been a greater master than Leslie of the phases of such delicate expression on the human face as may be excited by the slight passions and humours of the drawing-room or boudoir. His painting from the 'Rape of the Lock', in last year's Academy, was to my mind an absolute master-piece [1], and perhaps the most covetable picture of its kind which I ever remember seeing by an English artist. Equal to Hogarth in several of its passages of expression, it was raised in some respects above him by the exquisite grace and loveliness of the half-seen face of its heroine, and by the playful yet perfect dignity of its hero. Nor was it less admirable as a reading of Pope, for every subordinate character had been studied with such watchful reference to every word in which it is alluded to throughout the poem, that it seemed to me as if the spirit of the poet had risen beside the painter as he worked, and guided every touch of his pencil.

This, and much more than this, I wrote of the picture at the time it appeared, and sent my notice of it to *The Times*, together with one of Hunt and Inchbold. The letter was not inserted; and as the only part of it which I was very desirous to put before the public was that respecting Hunt, and I supposed the letter was too long for *The Times* in the form in which it was first sent, I withdrew the notices of Leslie and Inchbold, and sent it again in this reduced form. It was then

[1] His picture from Don Quixote, this year, is less important, but full of admirable power.

inserted; but it has always been a matter of serious regret to me that I had not the opportunity of directing the attention of the public specifically to this picture while it was on the Academy walls; and the more so, because it must very soon become my painful task to expose the weakness of the Author, when I would willingly have confined myself to praise of the Painter. The power over slight and passing expression is always a separate gift, eminently possessed by many caricaturists (for instance, in the highest degree by Leitch); and it has never, I believe, in a single instance, been consistent with any undersatnding of the qualities of the highest art. It was, therefore, the extreme of rashness in Mr. Leslie to attempt a work of criticism on historical or sacred painting. But it was worse than rashness—it was an inexcusable want of sense, to venture, farther, into the criticism of landscape art; and his work, instead of becoming what it was intended to be by the ingenious Mr. Murray, a guide to young painters, will remain a perpetual warning to painters advanced in life, not to suppose that, by watching the smiles of coquettes, they can learn to appreciate the ideals of the masters of religious art, or, by a life spent among the sophistications of the world, become sharers in the spirit of the great painters who have communed with the heart of Nature.

NOTES ON SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES EXHIBITED IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY AND THE SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

No. II: 1856

PREFACE

In presenting the second number of these *Notes* to the public, distinguished as they are from most of the criticism brought under their notice, by the writer's attaching his name to them, I may perhaps be permitted one or two words respecting the probable difference, in aim, between anonymous and acknowledged criticism; and this the rather, that I found, last year, the offence which the work, in its very nature, could not but give, seemed to be deepened instead of diminished by the fact of its being openly owned to; and I was bitterly accused of malice or unkindness, as if malice were usually the most outspoken passion in the world, and unkindness always the greater when it was ready to answer for itself.

It is evident that there can be but three reasons for a writer's concealment of his personality. Either, firstly, having confidence in what he has written, he must have none in his name (as I wrote the first volume of *Modern Painters*, sure of the truth of what I wrote, but fearing that I might not obtain fair hearing if the reader knew my youth). Or, secondly, he may know that his name would carry some weight with it, but may be ashamed of what he has written. Or, thirdly, there may be dangers of private loss or inconvenience, which he cannot speak openly without incurring, and which to avoid, he must get his opinion uttered as best he may, namelessly. Generally, I believe, the last reason to be the only legitimate one; and that, though in rare instances it may be wisdom to try to obtain a hearing under a masque, which would be

refused if the face were shown, in all ordinary cases it should be not only with the voice, but with the eyes, that men should address their fellows. I never felt at ease in my 'graduate' incognito, and although I consented, some nine years ago, to review Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art*, and Sir Charles Eastlake's *Essay on Oil Painting*, in *The Quarterly*, I have ever since steadily refused to write even for that once respectable periodical.[1]

But, as touching these *Notes*, of which I hope to continue the series yearly, I trust that the reader will feel that I have given him the best guarantee in my power of their sincere purpose, in signing them. If he thinks I always see the brightest colours in the works of my friends, or that it can only be in rooted malice that I point out an error in perspective, I have put it in his power to inquire into these matters, and to ascertain for himself whether indeed it is always a friend's work that I praise, or whether the transgressor of perspective law is conscious of any personal enmity between himself and me. And truly, it is a sorrowful thing to me, and one bearing witness, very bitterly, to the dishonesty of criticism in general, that people should be so ready to call every kind of faultfinding 'hostility' the moment they can bring it home to a known person. One would think, to hear them, that there was no right or wrong in art: that every opinion which men formed of it was dictated by prejudice, and expressed in passion; that all praise was treacherous—all rebuke malignant—and silence itself merely a pause of hesitation between Flattery and Slander.

[1] It has lately, I observe, in consequence, sought to amuse its readers by some account of my private affairs; of which—if the writer of the article in question is not ashamed of *his* name—I shall be happy to furnish him with more accurate details, as well as to recommend him to a school where he may learn what will not in future be disadvantageous to his writings—a little more astronomy and optics.

That it must sometimes be so, I am forced to believe, since the imputation of such dishonesty is constant; and it is strange, as well as frightful, to reflect how many forms of guilt are involved in one dishonest criticism. A common thief steals only property—a dishonest critic steals property, together with Fame, and the power of being useful. A common thief steals, for the most part, in imperfect knowledge of right. But a dishonest critic steals wittingly, and with all advantages of education. A common thief steals 'to satisfy his soul when he is hungry'; but a dishonest critic, to satisfy his soul when he is envious. A common liar risks the discovery, and bears the penalty of his own falsehood; but a lying critic shrinks behind his associates, and diffuses the discredit of his falsehood, while he multiplies its influence. A common liar, being discovered, leaves other men's honour unscathed. A lying critic, discovered, has infected with his own disgrace the men behind whom he stooped, and cast suspicion over the general honour of his race.

This, and much more than this, is the real character of all anonymous writers against conscience; and the evil of it would be too great to be, with a remnant of charity, imputed to any human being, were it not that men continually commit their most blameable acts in the mere dullness of habit, and are like dogs taught to pilfer, in whom we pardon, to the imperfect nature, what would be unpardonable in a rational one.

It is little to say that I am free from guilt such as this. I have striven, from the first day when I began to write, to reach an impartiality far beyond that of mere uprightness. It is possible to be thoroughly upright, and yet unconsciously partial—continually deceived by personal associations or instincts. I have striven for that higher impartiality, which can only be obtained by labour in conquering predilections, by toil in the successive study of opponent schools, and earnest endeavour to sympathize with the separate

spirit of each master I approached. And I can say fearlessly, that although it is not possible, in the time I am able to give to this work, to enter as I should desire into the consideration of every picture examined, yet I approach each of them with a distinct effort to gain the point of aspect by which its painter intended it to be commanded, and with a personal experience of the difficulties of various art, which renders me as charitable to true effort as disdainful of attempts to be great without labour. I say this, once for all, and the reader will perhaps pardon me this length of preface, since it is to assure him that I do not write these notes carelessly, nor look upon them as things of little importance. I look upon them, on the contrary, as one of the chief works which I have henceforward to do; and though from its very nature it must always be done hastily, it never will be done thoughtlessly, nor without the earnest hope that the pain I may have to give by unwilling blame, may be more than counterbalanced by the help which I know even the best painters may derive from the expression of an eager sympathy, and a faithful praise.

NOTES

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

Before fixing his attention on any particular work, if the reader will glance generally round any of the rooms, he will be struck by a singular change in the character of the entire exhibition. He will find that he can no longer distinguish the Pre-Raphaelite works as a separate class; but that between them and the comparatively few pictures remaining quite of the old school, there is a perfectly unbroken gradation, formed by the works of painters in various stages of progress, struggling forward out of their conventionalism to the Pre-Raphaelite standard. The meaning of this is simply that the battle is completely and confessedly won by the latter party; that animosity has changed into emulation, astonishment into sympathy, and that a true and consistent school of art is at last established in the Royal Academy of England.

Such an exhibition I have never yet seen, and the excellence of it is all the more to be rejoiced in, because it is every whit progressive. It does not consist merely in the splendour of the work of one noble artist, urged to unusual exertion (though this it can boast), nor in an accidental assemblage of happiest efforts of several (though by this also it is adorned); but in the achievement which has rewarded the steady effort of all, now at last turned in the right direction, and ensuring for each, in process of time, such utmost success as his genius is capable of. There is hardly an exhibitor this year who has not surpassed himself

and who will not surpass himself again in every subsequent effort; and I know that they must feel this, and must be as happy in their sense of sudden power, and in the perception of the new world opened to their sincerity, as we spectators have cause to be in the gifts of art they offer us.

As for my own special work, I look upon it as now almost supererogatory—I have little to do but to multiply monotonous terms of praise; for, now that nearly every picture in the room has a meaning, and the observer is thus led to expect one, and to exert his attention, I believe that people will easily distinguish such meanings for themselves, without the impertinence of explanation; and as for minor fault-finding, I hold it generally useless in the cases of artists who mean well, and are painting from Nature. They will gradually find out their faults for themselves, and the spectator ought seldom to have his attention withdrawn from the real merits by any carping at passages of failure. Last year several pictures, in which to point to anything was to point to an error, were put into the best places, when it was right at once to mark their demerit, in order to check this system of complimentary precedence. But this year, the worst pictures are, for the most part, in retired places, and there I shall have pleasure in leaving them. If I find fault with any others, it is either to help the observer in forming his judgment of art in general, or to suggest a possibly better mode of practice to the painter.

10. Christmas Day in St Peter's at Rome, 1854. (D. Roberts, R.A.)

The change above spoken of is very manifest in this, the first picture of importance enough to attract the eye. It is both careful and brilliant; and though I do not myself like the subject (neither caring for the architecture, nor the pomp, of St Peter's), I can

answer for the faithful delineation of what must be to most people a striking scene. The light and shade in this picture was very difficult, and is studiously wrought—note, for instance, the pretty and true change in the colour of the red cross in the dome, where it is half in shade and half in sun.

8. The Roadside Spring, Yorkshire. (E. C. Booth.)

From the pomp of marble and strength of multitude, let us turn back to this quiet nook beside the wild Yorkshire road, and consider a little whether the truer grandeur is in those lifted aisles or in this fragment of grey wall, overwaved by its few ears of corn, and ringing to the low voice of its lonely brooklet. The picture is not a first-rate one—it is not even a very special example of the advancing school; but the mind of the painter has been in happy tone when he chose his subject, and if you examine it, kneeling (there is no other way), as perhaps you would those flowers and grass by the roadside itself, I think you will have pleasure in watching the delicate tracery of the bush leaves, and the stoop of the poppy over the wall, and the soft moss and grass in its crannies, and the clear water, just making the road a little browner where it spreads over it. I cannot answer for the feelings of others, but I think there is more benediction to be had here than out of the magnificence of St Peter's.

17. 'Love's Labour Lost'. (F. R. Pickersgill, A.)

This picture presents the same elements of advance in a yet more curious and striking way. Mr Pickersgill is already a Pre-Raphaelite in purpose, and only fails, as when artists first begin to work thoroughly from nature they always fail, by painting the easiest things too definitely better than the rest. I do not mean that they ought to paint the easy things worse; but only that a discordance is always felt in this stage

of their study between the good accessory parts and failing principal ones. It is to be mended by conquering the difficult, not by surrendering the easy. If we examine the jewellery of the lady dressed in blue, in the centre, or the golden brocade of the one on the left, we shall find them very nearly right: the grass is also coming fast right; but Mr Pickersgill cannot yet paint a face. A little more hard work, taking his models just as they come, without any fear or flattery, and he will win his spurs.

35. Home. (J. N. Paton.)

A most pathetic and precious picture, easily understood, and entirely right as far as feeling is concerned. Mr Paton must have had more pleasure in painting this picture than in those fairy assemblies of his: and though the cottage details here are not so attractive as those nightshade and woodbine convolutions of leaf scenery, they are in reality better painted, and serve to better use. Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour. He should for this spring paint nothing but opening flowers, and, in the autumn, nothing but apricots and peaches.

39. The Stream from Llyn Idwal, Carnarvonshire. (A. W. Hunt.)

The best landscape I have seen in the exhibition for many a day—uniting most subtle finish and watchfulness of nature, with real and rare power of composition. The mass of mountain in the centre is grandly arranged, so as best to set off the action of its contour, and contrasted with the diagonal cleavages of rock on the left: note how they run from the foreground up to the crest of the hill. The *rents* of cloud, and fading or forming of the hill shadows through them, are magnificently expressed. It only wants a little more subtlety in the finish of the gradations: portions of those clouds ought to be stippled so delicately that

the eye could not trace the outmost touches—this would also give them more depth and unity. Seen a little way off, the work is spotty, at present, and wants bringing together, the worst part being the dappled blue sky on the left, in which the blue is not pure, nor the clouds soft, nor well set. The sheep in the foreground look too small—not but that real sheep in a Welsh foreground often do; but it is the painter's business to avoid this, and make everything look of its real size.

58. Cinderella, after her Sisters have left for the Ball. (Miss E. Turck.)

Very pretty, and well studied; but Cinderella does not look like the lady of a fairy tale. I am rather puzzled myself to know how her relationship to her remarkable godmother could best be indicated, so as to leave her still a quite *real* little lady in a real kitchen. But I am glad to see this sternly realistic treatment, at all events.

59. The White Owl. (W. G. Webbe.)

A careful study—the brown wing excellent. The softness of an owl's feathers is perhaps inimitable; but I think the breast might have come nearer the mark.

68. Little Red Riding Hood. (R. Redgrave, R.A.)

Mr Redgrave has, as far as I know, never painted so good a landscape. The ferns in the centre are beautiful; and there is evidence of painstaking and of good feeling everywhere.

75. The Last Parting of Marie Antoinette and her Son. (E. M. Ward, R.A.)

I fear this picture must be excepted from the progressive list, and marked as one of the representations of the old school; but it is not a bad one.

94. The Abandoned. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

Perhaps this also is rather a fortunate example of the artist's work than a new phase of it. But I never saw a Stanfield I liked so well: the sea is superb—quite Turnerian in the mystery of the farther waves—and the sentiment of the picture very grand; and that not by means of twilight, or sunset, or moonlight, or any strangeness of arrangement or elaboration of idea, but by simple fact of deserted ship and desert sea.

101. The Greetings in the Desert, Egypt—'Selamet Teiyibeen. (J. F. Lewis.)

The superposition of this picture to 'West Australian' is the first glaring piece of bad hanging I note in the Academy this year. Mr Cooper's picture, whatever its merits may be, is executed so as to have been seen quite as well in the upper place; while Mr Lewis's cannot be seen in the least but on the line. It would take no trouble, any afternoon when the Academy closes, to change the places; and I am sure that Mr Cooper would, in enforcing such an arrangement, be felt to have paid a just tribute to the talents of a great brother artist, and to have done himself little injury, and much honour.

Of the style of Mr Lewis's picture I need only say that it is like that of his work in general, and refer the reader to the note on the example of it in the rooms of the Water Colour Society. There is, however, a very curious and skilful circumstance in the composition here; the neck of the camel was too serpentine, and stopped too abruptly after suggesting this undulation of line. The white cloud beyond at once varies, and continues, this serpentine tendency, leading it away towards the upper edge of the picture, while the straight flakes of cloud, descending obliquely to the right, oppose the two upright peaks of the saddle.

I may as well refer at once to Mr Lewis's other work, 336 (the Academy is rich in possessing two). How two such pictures have been executed, together with the drawing for the Water Colour Society, all within the year, is to me wholly inconceivable; there seems a year's work in 336 alone. Yet it is not a favourable example of the master; the toil being too palpable and equal on the stones in the reflected light; where also there is neither colour nor form of interest enough to justify it. The draperies and trelliswork are faultlessly marvellous.

131. 'Many Happy Returns of the Day'. (W. P. Frith, R. A.)

A taking picture, much, it seems to me, above Mr Frith's former standard. Note the advancing Pre-Raphaelitism in the wreath of leaves round the child's head. One is only sorry to see any fair little child having too many and too kind friends, and in so great danger of being toasted, toyed, and wreathed into selfishness and misery.

138. Mr. David Fox. (Sir J. W. Gordon, R.A.)

A very noble portrait, and in the unassuming but powerful features thoroughly characteristic. I am heartily glad to see this work of honour to a good painter so well accomplished.

145. Geraniums. (Miss Mutrie.)

146. Roses. (Miss A. F. Mutrie.)

I cannot say more of the work of the two Misses Mutrie than I have said already. It is nearly as good as simple flower-painting can be; the only bettering it is capable of would be by more able composition, or by the selection, for its subject, of flowers growing naturally. Why not a roadside bank of violets? 335

and 342 are the best examples, by these artists, in this exhibition.

147. Saved! (Sir E. Landseer, R.A.)

I wish this picture had not been put so high, for the bolder Landseer is in handling, the more interesting his work becomes, under close observance: nor does his peculiar system of clay-colouring gain at all in effect by distance. I never saw a child fall into water, nor a dog bring one out; but under such circumstances are not its clothes usually wet? and do not wet clothes cling to the limbs?

155. Her Majesty the Empress Eugenie. (E. Boutibonne.)

This would have been a really admirable portrait but for its foggy and slovenly distance. Complete that, and the work would look almost like life.

160. The Letter. (E. Delfosse.)

A fair example of a peculiar, and very clever, though perhaps I should hardly call it meritorious, style, lately much adopted by French artists. It is a mannerism of softness, and subduing of all very bright colours—more or less successful in result, of course, according to the painter's general powers; but yet seeming to be taught in schools of art so extensive and so popular as to assimilate a large number of painters not only in style, but in aim, and prevent their emerging from a charmed circle of subjects—consisting usually of pretty women, sprightly in expression, but rather blunt in chiselling of features, wearing prettily brocaded dresses, and doing nothing, prettily. These works seem to be gradually constituting a species of manufacture, which supplies the French drawing-rooms with pictures, as Sèvres does with china.

Nevertheless, one very original painter belongs to this school, of whom more presently.[1]

162. The Graces. (W. E. Frost, A.)

I believe Mr Frost might be a painter if he chose; but he will not become one by multiplying studies of this kind; looking like Etty's with all the colour scraped off. Everybody knows well enough by this time, that Graces always stand on one leg, and bend the other, and never have anything to fasten their dresses with at the waists. Cannot Mr Frost tell us something new?

175. The Emperor Charles V at Yuste. (A. Elmore, A.)

One of the works still belonging wholly to the old school: there is a good deal of fair painting in it, but an extraordinary missing of the main mark throughout. See the second paragraph of the long quotation in the catalogue:

> Again the afternoon sun was shining over the great walnut-tree, full into the gallery. From this pleasant spot, filled with the fragrance of the garden and the murmur of the fountain, and bright with glimpses of the golden Vera, they carried him to the gloomy chamber of his sleepless nights, and laid him on the bed from which he was to rise no more.

Naturally we expect the painter to take some pains (as he has given this quotation) in the expression of verdure, fragrance, and sunshine. But the walnut-tree is grey, not green; the air, judging by the look of it, cannot be perfumed by anything but paint; and there is no sunshine anywhere, while the whitish light, which is given for it, shines not over the tree into the gallery, but from the back of the spectator. The exhibited pictures by Titian (!) are greyer than all the

[1] See Notes on French Exhibition at the close of the pamphlet.

rest. Charles must have bought them from an exceedingly dishonest dealer.

200. Peace concluded, 1856. (J. E. Millais, A.)

I thought, some time ago, that this painter was likely to be headed by others of the school; but Titian himself could hardly head him now. This picture is as brilliant in invention as consummate in executive power; both this and Autumn Leaves, 448, will rank in future among the world's best masterpieces; and I see no limit to what the painter may hope in future to achieve. I am not sure whether he may not be destined to surpass all that has yet been done in figure-painting, as Turner did all past landscape.[1]

221. The Breakwater at Plymouth. (F. R. Lee, R.A.)

It is long since Mr Lee painted such a picture as this; nor, as far as I recollect, has any one else yet so faithfully rendered the sweep of large waves over level wall. The sense of space is very great throughout, and there is really fine feeling and treatment in the dying away of the successive spray-clouds at the end of the long path of stone. There are several studies of sea by Mr Lee this year which seem to me to mark quite a new energy in his mind: all of them are earnest, and quite separated from the usual types of conventional gale and wave. This is the best, but 318 is another good example. Its rock foreground is evidently painted from nature, and is very fine in form; though there are awkward flaws here and there, the consequence seemingly of prolonged habits, hardly broken off, of working without reference to fact. For instance, in the calm pool of water on the left, the stones on the

[1] Note the hint for bringing more of nature into our common work, in the admirable modelling of the polar bear and lion, though merely children's toys.

left side have reflections, but those on the right side, none.

230. Master Isaac Newton in his Garden at Woolsthorpe, in the Autumn of 1665. (R. Hannah.)

One of the somewhat incipient pictures of the rising school, but of considerable merit. The Nemesis of Pre-Raphaelitism is its way of fixing on precisely the ugliest things it can find to paint. I don't believe there is such another uninteresting tree trunk within a circle of ten miles round London, as the one in the centre of this, Sir Isaac's garden. The execution is also hard, though careful: one of the most successful bits is the head of Diamond; not content with 'Amusing himself with a book', but having also half a mind to the apple; and proposing speedily to interfere with, if not prevent altogether, the discovery of the solar system.

262. The Village Postman. (J. M. Carrick.)

If the reader glances along the various pictures hung near the floor, in any of the rooms, he will find that nearly every other one consists of an attentive study; there is, indeed, so much care taken with so many minor works, that it becomes impossible to distinguish all as they deserve; and I may, perhaps, have missed some that contain more than study—real achievement. But I can only name this one, as a leading specimen, out of a large number not by any means perfect, but presenting many interesting natural scenes and thoughts, and highly conscientious in execution. There has been immense labour in this picture, and it is very genuine throughout: the old stone-slated roof and ivy are first-rate, and the figures of the child and its grandfather coming out slowly to see if there is indeed a letter, wrought with more than usual fidelity to rustic character.

295. 'And the Prayer of Faith shall Save the Sick'. (J. Phillip.)

I never yet saw so much progress made by any painter in one year as Mr Phillip has made, from his stiff black and red figures and fans of last year, to this very sweet picture: the principal head with its opalescent earring, is quite beautiful. There are several other works of great character and power by this painter.

300. An Interior. (F. D. Hardy.)

An exquisite little piece of interior painting; hurt only by some conventionality in finishing. For instance, how is it possible that, the sunbeams entering only by that one small window, the principal figures should be in full light, or the shadow fall at a steep angle from the knife-handle over the block in the left-hand corner? But with his powers of execution, a little more faithfulness will make Mr Hardy a perfect painter in this kind.

311. The Novice. (J. C. Horsley, A.)

There is always a sweet feeling in Mr Horsley's pictures; this is an old story, but prettily told—the elder nuns watching anxiously and pitifully, and the dove seeking rest in the bosom.

312. Mid-Spring. (J. W. Inchbold.)

Though not a satisfactory picture, this is one of the most curious efforts of the Pre-Raphaelites this year. The place chosen has been a lovely spot, and the execution of the hyacinths and grass is as close and wonderful a piece of work as there is on the room walls. Take a magnifying glass and look at the squirrel and bird on the tree high up on the left, and the two other birds flying in the wood beyond, and give time to the whole, and it will please you. But Mr Inchbold must

choose subjects with more mass of shade in them; this was, in its essential nature, impracticable, the light being all too high for imitation. Hence the apparent hardness of result.

It is quite worth while, some day, to bring a small opera-glass with you into the architectural room, to examine the exquisite painting of withered heather, and rock, in Mr Inchbold's other picture, 1187.

320. The Glen, Chudleigh, Devon. (W. F. Witherington, R. A.)

Here is another great advance on the picture of last year: hurt a good deal by want of shadow-tone on the figures, and perhaps also by too great richness of subject. This excess of quantity is a grievous temptation to all artists: many of Turner's largest works were destroyed by it. Everything that is beyond the spectator's power of easy attention, and is yet not so perfectly painted as to call for his fully *excited* attention, hurts a picture instead of helping it.

352. Chatterton. (H. Wallis.)

Faultless and wonderful: a most noble example of the great school. Examine it well inch by inch: it is one of the pictures which intend, and accomplish, the entire placing before your eyes of an actual fact—and that a solemn one. Give it much time. Mr Wallis has another very wonderful effort, 516, but it is harder and less successful. I suppose the face of Marvell is a portrait, but he does not look to me like a person who would return a bribe.

393. The Scapegoat. (W. H. Hunt.)

This singular picture, though in many respects faultful, and in some wholly a failure, is yet on the whole the one, of all in the gallery, which should furnish us with most food for thought. First, consider it simply as an indication of the temper and aim of the

rising artists of England. Until of late years, young painters have been mostly divided into two groups; one poor, hard-working, and suffering, compelled more or less, for immediate bread, to obey whatever call might be made upon them by patron or publisher; the other, of perhaps more manifest cleverness or power, able in some degree to command the market, and apt to make the pursuit of art somewhat complementary to that of pleasure; so that a successful artist's studio has not been in general a place where idle and gay people would have found themselves ill at ease, or at a loss for amusement. But here is a young painter, the slave neither of poverty nor pleasure, —emancipated from the garret, despising the green room, and selecting for his studio a place where he is liable certainly to no agreeable forms of interruption. He travels, not merely to fill his portfolio with pretty sketches, but in as determined a temper as ever mediæval pilgrim, to do a certain work in the Holy Land. Arrived there, with the cloud of Eastern War gathered to the north of him, and involving, for most men, according to their adventurous or timid temper, either an interest which would at once have attracted them to its immediate field, or a terror which would have driven them from work in its threatening neighbourhood, he pursues calmly his original purpose; and while the hills of the Crimea were white with tents of war, and the fiercest passions of the nations of Europe burned in high funeral flames over their innumerable dead, one peaceful English tent was pitched beside a shipless sea; and the whole strength of an English heart spent in painting a weary goat, dying upon its salt sand.

And utmost strength of heart it needed. Though the tradition that a bird cannot fly over this sea is an exaggeration, the air in its neighbourhood is stagnant and pestiferous, polluted by the decaying vegetation brought down by the Jordan in its floods; the bones

of the beasts of burden that have died by the 'way of the sea' lie like wrecks upon its edge, bared by the vultures, and bleached by the salt ooze, which, though tideless, rises and falls irregularly, swoln or wasted. Swarms of flies, fed on the carcases, darken an atmosphere heavy at once with the poison of the marsh, and the fever of the desert; and the Arabs themselves will not encamp for a night amidst the exhalations of the volcanic chasm.

This place of study the young English painter chooses. He encamps a little way above it; sets his easel upon its actual shore; pursues his work with patience through months of solitude; and paints, crag by crag, the purple mountains of Moab, and grain by grain, the pale ashes of Gomorrah.

And I think his object was one worthy of such an effort. Of all the scenes in the Holy Land, there are none whose present aspect tends so distinctly to confirm the statements of Scripture, as this condemned shore. It is therefore exactly the scene of which it might seem most desirable to give a perfect idea to those who cannot see it for themselves; it is that also which fewest travellers are able to see; and which, I suppose, no one but Mr Hunt himself would ever have dreamed of making the subject of a close pictorial study. The work was therefore worth his effort, and he has connected it in a simple, but most touching way, with other subjects of reflection, by the figure of the animal upon its shore. This is, indeed, one of the instances in which the subject of a picture is wholly incapable of explaining itself; but, as we are too apt —somewhat too hastily—to accept at once a subject as intelligible and rightly painted, if we happen to know enough of the story to interest us in it, so we are apt, somewhat unkindly, to refuse a painter the little patience of inquiry or remembrance, which, once granted, would enable him to interest us all the more deeply, because the thoughts suggested were not

entirely familiar. It is necessary, in this present instance, only to remember that the view taken by the Jews of the appointed sending forth of the scapegoat into the Wilderness was that it represented the carrying away of their sin into a place uninhabited and forgotten; and that the animal on whose head the sin was laid, became accursed; so that 'though not commanded by the law, they used to maltreat the goat Azazel—to spit upon him, and to pluck off his hair'.[1] The goat, thus tormented, and with a scarlet fillet bound about its brow, was driven by the multitude wildly out of the camp: and pursued into the Wilderness. The painter supposes it to have fled towards the Dead Sea, and to be just about to fall exhausted at sunset—its hoofs entangled in the crust of salt upon the shore. The opposite mountains, seen in the fading light, are that chain of Abarim on which Moses died.

Now, we cannot, I think, esteem too highly, or receive too gratefully, the temper and the toil which have produced this picture for us. Consider for a little while the feelings involved in its conception, and the self-denial and resolve needed for its execution; and compare them with the modes of thought in which our former painters used to furnish us annually with their 'Cattle pieces' or 'Lake scenes', and I think we shall see cause to hold this picture as one more truly honourable to us, and more deep and sure in its promise of future greatness in our schools of painting, than all the works of 'high art' that since the foundation of the Academy have ever taxed the wonder, or weariness, of the English public. But, at the same time, this picture indicates a danger to our students of a kind hitherto unknown in any school; the danger of a too great intensity of feeling, making them forget

[1] Sermon preached at Lothbury, by the Rev. H. Melvill. (*Pulpit*, Thursday, March 27th, 1856.)

the requirements of painting as an *art*. This picture, regarded merely as a landscape, or as a composition, is a total failure. The mind of the painter has been so excited by the circumstances of the scene, that, like a youth expressing his earnest feeling by feeble verse (which seems to him good, because he *means* so much by it), Mr Hunt has been blinded by his intense senti ment to the real weakness of the pictorial expression ; and in his earnest desire to paint the Scapegoat, has forgotten to ask himself first, whether he could paint a goat at all.

I am not surprised that he should fail in painting the distant mountains ; for the forms of large distant landscape are a quite new study to the Pre-Raphaelites, and they cannot be expected to conquer them at first : but it is a great disappointment to me to observe, even in the painting of the goat itself, and of the fillet on its brow, a nearly total want of all that effective manipulation which Mr Hunt displayed in his earlier pictures. I do not say that there is absolute want of skill—there may be difficulties encountered which I do not perceive ; but the difficulties, whatever they may have been, are not conquered : this may be very faithful and very wonderful painting—but it is not *good* painting ; and much as I esteem feeling and thought in all works of art, still I repeat, again and again, a painter's business is first to *paint*. No one could sympathize more than I with the general feeling displayed in the 'Light of the World' ; but unless it had been accompanied with perfectly good nettle-painting, and ivy painting, and jewel painting, I should never have praised it ; and though I acknowledge the good purpose of this picture, yet, inasmuch as there is no good hair-painting, nor hoof-painting in it [1], I hold it to be good only as an omen,

[1] I believe, however, the painter was under worse difficulty in painting this goat than even with his sheep picture, it being, of course, impossible to get the animal to stand

not as an achievement; and I have hardly ever seen a composition, left apparently almost to chance, come so unluckily: the insertion of the animal in the exact centre of the canvas, making it look as if it were painted for a sign. I can only, therefore, in thanking Mr Hunt heartily for his work, pray him, for practice sake, now to paint a few pictures with less feeling in them; and more handling.

413. Subject and painter not yet named in the Catalogue. The former, not very intelligible; the latter is reported to be a younger member of the new school—Mr Burton. His work is masterly, at all events, and he seems capable of the greatest things.

448. Autumn Leaves. (J. E. Millais, A.)

By much the most poetical work the painter has yet conceived; and also, as far as I know, the first instance existing of a perfectly painted twilight. It is as easy, as it is common, to give obscurity to Twilight, but to give the glow within its darkness is another matter; and though Giorgione might have come near the glow, he never gave the valley mist. Note also the subtle difference between the purple of the long nearer range of hills, and the blue of the distant peak emerging beyond.

still for a moment in an attitude indicating utter weariness. Observe also, that though heavily painted, yet being done every whit from nature, the picture lights the room, far away, just as Turner's used to do (and compare the notes on Nos. 873 and 1002). Only Turner never makes a reflection in water brighter than the sky above it, which, unless the crystals of salt whiten the surface even of this glowing water, seems to be the case here. I suppose the water was painted at one season of the year and the sky at another—both from nature, but, in result, discordant, and afterwards unalterable, as the complex hues of those far-followed reflections do not admit of 'toning down', but by separately re-painting every one. Observe, finally, the picture should, if possible, be seen on a dark day or in twilight, when its fullest effect is developed.

515. View on the Banks of the Thames at Maidenhead. (J. D. Harding.)

A very beautiful and well composed Harding: but *not* a view on the Thames at Maidenhead. The hills in this picture vary from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in height. The clouds are admirably arranged: it is the best composed sky, after Lewis's, that I see in the rooms. But, considering Mr Harding's well-known skill in trees, I am vexed, partly with myself and partly with him, because after long consideration, I am totally unable to form a guess as to the species of tree meant in the group to the left.

532. The Prosperous Days of Job. (W. T. C. Dobson.)

One of the earnest readings of Scripture, which are the truest pride of modern art. How often has Job been painted with the look of a haggard, aged, and despairing mendicant—how seldom, in this first era of his life, the refined oriental lord; leading a life of mercy, and judgment, and truth. The despair indicated in the writhe of the lips and pressure of the knit hands on the head, in the fallen figure, is thoroughly grand; and the watching female figure above is very tender and lovely. All Mr Dobson's works are good (though this is the best), as far as feeling is concerned; but their colour, or rather want of colour, is deeply to be regretted. Does Mr Dobson really see Nature as always white and buff—or does he think Buff a specially sacred colour? In *my* mind, it is associated chiefly with troopers' jerkins.

542. Market Day. (G. B. O'Neill.)

Of the old school, but very delicately painted. There is far too much in it to be natural. It is a map of a market day, instead of a picture of one.

578. April Love. (A. Hughes.)

Exquisite in every way: lovely in colour, most subtle in the quivering expression of the lips, and sweetness of the tender face, shaken, like a leaf by winds upon its dew, and hesitating back into peace.

A second very disgraceful piece of bad placing—the thrusting this picture thus aside!

583. Chioggian Fishing Vessels, etc., running into the Lagune of Venice, on the approach of a borasco or violent squall, on the Adriatic. (E. W. Cooke, A.)

Another instance of the extraordinary good fortune which characterizes the exhibition of this year, in possessing the happiest efforts of almost every master. Do any of us recollect so impressive a study of shipping as this by Mr Cooke, much as he has hunted such quarries across the foam? It is admirably true to the Venetian boat—and the Venetian boat and all the ways of it are beautiful.

592. Highland Mary. (T. Faed.)

Mr Faed's best work this year; very lovely in its kind; and the distance, though conventional, well composed. Mr Faed's time for repentance does not seem yet to have come—he will paint grandly, I think, when it does. His other picture is a mere echo of the popular one of last year.

615. Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre. (H. Le Jeune.)

Another earnest and most touching reading of Scripture. I never saw that gaze of Mary into the sepulchre—just before she 'turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing'—given so faithfully. Much fault might be found with the mere painting; but I will find none! for the main and moving facts are there. Give the picture time, and it will bring tears.

1190. The Eve of St Agnes. (A. Hughes.)

A noble picture, apparently too hastily finished, and very wrongly put into this room. It looks too blue; but remember it is entirely a night piece, admitting moonlight into the chambers; and if a piece of real moonlight were seen, instead of the picture, through the walls of the room, it would look just as strangely blue: the fault which the eye catches is chiefly that the blue glass casts a white light, and the colours in the left hand subject are confused in relation. The ivy on the tree trunk has clearly been done without a natural model, and is not creditable to the painter of the ivy in No. 578. The half entranced, half startled, face of the awaking Madeline is exquisite; but the lover's, in both the centre and right-hand subject very far from satisfactory. If, however, the reader knows the poem, he will be grateful for the picture; and there is promise in it of high excellence.

873, 885, 1002 are three intensely faithful studies in the East, by Holman Hunt. The gleam of the Dead Sea in the distance of 873 is quite marvellous, and the drawing of the Sphinx is an invaluable record. Probably the reader who has never studied natural facts will think the colouring extraordinary, as Turner's used to be thought. It is, nevertheless, precisely true—touch for touch. I have given the reasons of its apparent want of truth in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv, chap. 3, ss. 8, *et seq.*

I must here close my *Notes* on the present exhibition, though I know that I have missed count of many good pictures; but I am somewhat tired with previous work, and cannot meet the large range of excellence in the Academy this year with correlative exertion. One or two works, also, I have to note in other exhibitions.

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

THE pictures in this pleasant room are so easily distinguishable and accessible, that I think it will be better to refer to them in the order of their importance (or that which seems to me such) than in the regular succession of the catalogue.

1. No. 134

If this picture is painted in firm colours, and will stand against time; and if it gets into good hands, and is safely kept, it will one day be among things which men will come to England from far away to see, and will go back to their homes saying 'I have seen it', as people come back now from Venice, saying they have seen Titian's 'Peter Martyr'; or from Milan, saying they have seen the 'Sposalizio'. I have no hesitation in ranking it among the most *wonderful* pictures in the world; nor do I believe that, since the death of Paul Veronese, anything has been painted comparable to it in its own way.

I rank it with Veronese's work, because it is painted on the same principles of colour and design; and shows just as much ease of hand, though the execution is modified by the smallness of scale, and by the resolution to obtain certain effects of light which the Venetian would not have cared for: but if this picture were magnified so as to show the figures the size of life, it would be felt at once that no work but Veronese's could stand against it for a moment; and I only regret that its admirableness of detail should be concentrated so as to become, to most people, all but invisible. If the reader will take a magnifying glass

to it, and examine it touch by touch, he will find that, literally, any four square inches of it contain as much as an ordinary water-colour drawing; nay, he will, perhaps, become aware of refinements in its handling which escape the naked eye altogether. Let him examine, for instance, with a good lens, the eyes of the camels, and he will find there is as much painting beneath their drooping fringes as would, with most painters, be thought enough for the whole head: or let him look at the cane-work of the back of the chair on the right, and he will find as many touches in one of its meshes as, according to the notion of water-colour painting ordinarily, would suffice for the tracery of a Gothic window.

Yet, marvellous as this quantity of detail is, the quantity is not the chief wonder, but the *breadth*. It is amazing that there should be so much, but far more amazing that this Much should all be Right. Labour and delicacy we may find, unwearied and unsurpassable, in missal painting, and in old Flemish work of the Van Eyck school. But labour thus concentrated in large purpose—detail thus united into effective mass—has not been seen until now. All minute work has been more or less broken work; and the most precious pictures were divisible by segments. But here, gradations which are wrought out through a thousand threads or meshes, are as broad and calm in unity as if struck with a single sweep of the hand. Look at the way the pale circle of the tent is gradated, through its woven pattern, with the effect of transparent light beneath. I have never seen anything quite comparable to it reached by art.[1]

[1] Merely as a piece of technical composition, note the way in which this canopy is repeated and balanced by the matting below; hide the matting with the hand, and see how top heavy the canopy becomes. The dead fawn, in like manner, repeats and relieves the colour-mass of the principal standing camel.

Let us, however, recovering as best we may from our amazement at this toil, and this success, look for a little while at the meaning of the picture—meaning which we find indicated by the painter in the most subtle way. The hand of the principal figure droops negligently at its side, yet so as to point to an unfolded map. The letters on this map are of course reversed, as it lies open rightly for its owner, therefore upside down to the spectator; but the title of it is carefully made legible:

MAP OF
SYRIA,
ANCIENT AND MODERN

and the picture itself is a map of antiquity and modernism in the East; the Englishman encamped under Mount Sinai.

The reader must pardon me a momentary allusion to work of my own; for it has not been without some toil that I, also, have been lately endeavouring to trace the kind of contrast which exists between the ancient and modern temper of the human race. Mr Lewis was wholly ignorant of my work, and I of his. In closing an inquiry into the modern feeling respecting scenery consecrated by solemn associations, I said:

'I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one shooting over it.'

Some of those semi-serious people who never know earnest from jest, accused me of levity in saying this. I said it not in levity, but in stern soberness; yet certainly it was with strange surprise that I saw that this great painter had given his year's labour to develop a similar thought, and that, four months only after the sentence was written, the most notable picture on the exhibition walls of London was an accurate fulfilment of its words—Mount Sinai, with a foreground of dead game.

Special examination of the points of various interest

in this picture is, of course, impossible—it would need a separate essay. I shall only note one or two things which, under any circumstances, the reader should not miss.

Note first the labour in the sky. The whole field of it is wrought gradually out with touches no larger than the filaments of a feather. It is, in fact, an embroidered sky—Penelope's web was slight work compared to it ;—such a thing, as far as I know, never painter endured to do before. The purpose of this is to get the peculiar look of heat haze, and depth of colour, with light, which there is in all skies of warm climates. It cannot be got otherwise : but, inasmuch as whatever work may be given to it, it cannot, in some respects, be got at all, the *light* of it being unapproachable, it almost grieves me to see the labour spent to obtain only an approximate result. Still in this one picture, I feel that it ought to have been done, in order that all might be as well as it could be.

Secondly, Examine the rock drawing of the Sinai, exquisite alike in hue and form, and conquering, stone by stone, the difficulty which, to all landscape painters but Turner, has been hitherto unconquerable, of expressing fallen masses of debris in their endless complexity.

If I venture to speak of a fault in this part of the work, it is only as acknowledging that human strength must always fail somewhere : Veronese is sometimes too flat—Tintoret sometimes too dark—Leonardo sometimes too hard—Turner sometimes too mysterious —Lewis sometimes too definite. Throughout this picture we may trace, here and there, a slightly *linear* violence ; as, for instance, in the black outline round the lower part of the dead fawn in the foreground, which is not entirely true, and gives the work, here and there, a slight aspect of meagreness. The lines of fissure and shadow on the rocks, and round the stones of the distant Sinai, are thus a little too sharp

and thin; indicating some remains of the painter's old manner of using the pencil point, as in his sketches in Spain.

The faces, however, as well as the draperies, are entirely free from this fault, and the intensity of character reached in them surpasses, I think, all the painter's former efforts. Even the more distant figures are full of portrait character of the most perfect finish. It may be useful to any reader who is himself fond of drawing, to note the subtlety of *truth* on which all depends. Take, for instance, the head of the Arab between the Sheikh and the camel, and note the dim sparkle of light in one eye, missed in the other. A common painter would have put it into both; but he would have spoiled the head, for it could not have been in both. The point of light in the right one is the reflection, on the under part of the ball, of the light from the nose, which could, of course, be seen on the sunlighted side only. The Arab, whose face is half seen behind the tassel of the housings of one of the camels, which takes the place of his beard, is another thoroughly grand piece of character. There seems much difference of opinion as to the type of head adopted for the figure of the Englishman. I think it very right;—quiet, delicate, firm, and Cœur de Lion like. The two dogs, like all Lewis's animals, are inimitable.

I have nearly exhausted terms of praise, and have none left, now, strong enough for the complexity and skill of the *composition*. The deliciousness of some of the bits of grey and pale flickering colour, and the way the innumerable lines and hues flow together, without flaw or a fallacy anywhere, complete the strange merits and marvels of this work. I trust, whatever its destination, that measures may be taken to preserve it from excess of light, and from damp. Body-colour preserved (as in manuscripts) in shade, and kept dry, has stood unchanged for six hundred

years; but the slightest adverse influences are to be dreaded for a work of this delicacy, when so much depends upon so little, and when every gleam of colour is precious.

It will be observed that on each side of this brilliant and delicate picture is hung a drawing of excessive darkness and boldness, by David Cox. This was thoroughly well judged—there is no rivalship—but a kindly and effective contrast. The two drawings of English moors (128, 140), gain in gloom and power by the opposition to the African sunlight; and Lewis's finish is well set off by the impatient breadth of Cox. No. 140 is a very interesting example of this master: so also the smaller ones, 234, 240.

83. Her Majesty the Queen inspecting the Wounded Coldstream Guards in the Hall of Buckingham Palace.

A very interesting and successful drawing, apparently full of good portraiture, and certainly of right expression. It is notable for its frank and firm execution; in general, artists are appalled by the presence of Majesty, and in their earnest desire to do well, are apt to lose their power, and make their work too soft or too polished; but Mr Gilbert has retained his presence of mind, and has given an effective rendering of a touching and memorable scene.

23. Huntsman's Boy and Bloodhounds.

This is the best drawing Mr Tayler has produced for some time, but best only inasmuch as it deals with a subject familiar both to him and to us, on a somewhat larger scale than usual. Indeed, as long as Mr Tayler persists in his faith that natural form and colour are only to be represented by an ingenious imposition of slops or blots, it is quite useless to criticize his work. Beyond a certain point he cannot, by any physical possibility, advance: that point he had reached fifteen years ago, and it is not a high one.

256, 271. 'An Itinerant'. 'Devotion'.

Two superb drawings by Mr Hunt—fortunate in the features and expression of the models chosen, and like all the master's work, consummate in execution. As a piece of artistical handling and dexterity, the woolly hair of the negro is a lesson which cannot be too long studied.

The other drawings by this master, in the room, are, of course, all good; but perhaps, less *delightful* than usual. I miss his hawthorn blossom, mossy banks, and birds: there are two or three pounds of grapes—those in 285 particularly good; but, when not on the vine, grapes are precisely the dullest fruit that can be painted; and I can only advise, or beg, any reader who is inclined to attend to me, never in future to buy any of Hunt's grapes. He wastes an inconceivable quantity of time on them, and this is the fault of the public, for the grapes always sell.

1, 4. Studies of Lake Scenery. (Mr William Turner.) The works of this painter are always tender in feeling, but the larger of these is a strained and mistaken effort; the second is very true and right.

22, 167. Two very interesting studies of Sea. (Mr Jackson.) The breaking of the low waves in 167 is as true as can be; and both pictures are delicate and earnest in perception of phenomena of sea and sky. The *land* is bad, in both.

20. Another study of the same class (Mr Naftel); not so good in execution, but well meant. It looks as if painted on the spot, and the cirri in the sky are very true: there is a pleasant sense of the evening wind whistling among the stones as the sun touches their edges with its last gleam. The handling is, however, flat and coarse; each of these stones ought to have had nearly as much work on it as there is in the

whole picture. 52 is also an earnest effort, though very faulty in the work on the water. Mr Naftel will find, on testing his work accurately, that he has cast the shadows inconsistently on the castle, and they destroy the effect of its light.

68. A quiet and unaffected study (Mr Duncan): remarkable for the absence of all meretricious character. I love colour as well as most people, but confess that a little less cobalt and vermilion would better most of the pictures on the walls of this room.

90. 'View in Glencoe'. (Mr Rosenberg). This is one of the truest pieces of mountain study in the room—evidently wholly from nature, and though feeble in execution, satisfactory in general effect. But Mr Rosenberg may depend upon it, mountains are quite as delicate as fruit, and he must take not less pains with them.

112, 165. Studies from Nature. (Mr Fripp, and Mr Glennie). Very good in their way; yet rather things to be kept in the artists' folios, for their own use, than to be exhibited.

168. Sunrise on the Jungfrau. (Mr Collingwood.) Striking in effect; and an attractive picture, but sadly wanting in accuracy of detail. If the artist would draw the mountain carefully, and then work out this same effect, with rock substance beneath it, he might produce a valuable drawing. And the effect itself, simple as it is, would have been twice as good if the artist had not indulged himself with a bright yellow light on his cow, and spots of pure white and yellow about the roots of his pines, while the first rays of dawn are still a mile or two above them, and cannot get down to them for an hour and a half yet, at the very least. The picture, as it is, cannot be considered a study from nature; and it forms a connecting link

between the works above noticed, in which the artist's *intention*, at least, is to be true, and those forming the larger portion of the exhibition, in which the intention is to be pretty, or clever. These, though there is much dexterity in some of them, need not separately be noticed, as they involve little of interest, except variations in touch, or expedients for getting opposition in blue and orange, yellow and purple, according to the formulæ of colour-science. On the whole, the exhibition is greatly above the average; and the public seem to have discerned this, for the little bits of blue which the artists like to see completing their harmonies of colour, are now wanting to very few of the pictures. I am heartily glad to see this; for of all modes of spending money in self indulgence, none are perhaps so collaterally kind, as the encouragement of an art so healthy and pleasurable as Water-colour Painting.

I have no space left for detailed notice of the other exhibitions, but cannot pass unnamed the very remarkable picture in the rooms of the Society of British Artists, No. 110, 'Eavesdroppers', by J. Campbell, one of the most earnest pieces of domestic homely truth I have ever seen: nor, in the French Exhibition in Pall Mall, the series of cottage studies, by Edouard Pierre, 150 to 155, quite unequalled, it seems to me, in sincerity and truth of conception, though somewhat dimly painted. (Compare note on pictures in Academy, No. 160.) I ought, perhaps, to have said, truth of *sight*, rather than truth of conception; for I have been informed that this artist, rambling from cottage to cottage and telling the peasantry 'never to mind him', watches and seizes some actual moment of action in the undisturbed family; recording, also, with historical fidelity, the position of every article of domestic furniture, and with such scrupulousness, that being on one occasion requested to enrich a somewhat blank piece

of background by the addition of some piece of delf or pewter which had caught the purchaser's eye in another study, 'No', he replied, 'I cannot do that: it was in another cottage.'

I consider these pictures, therefore, as examples of true Historical Painting, and of very high value. It is quite impossible to say what importance may, in some future day, attach to such records of the French peasant life of the 19th century.

NOTES ON SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES EXHIBITED IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY AND THE SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

No III : 1857

NOTES

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

As year by year, in the Royal Academy, the principles established by the Pre-Raphaelites are more frankly accepted, and more patiently put in practice, I observe that, notwithstanding all the substantial advantage derived from them, two results must necessarily follow, involving some disappointment to the public, and great mortification to the artist. I see that we shall have more wayside nooks, corners of green fields, pools of watercress streams, and such like, than can, in the aggregate, contribute much to the amusement of the restless and over-excited crowd of London spectators; and I see also that there will be so high an average of perseverance and care brought to bear on every subject, that both will pass unnoticed unless recommended by more brilliant qualities; and painters who flattered themselves that the devotion of a year's honest labour could not but make their pictures conspicuous, and their names illustrious, will find, with bitter disappointment, that patience and sincerity are no longer distinctive, and that industry will soon be less notable than sloth.

Respecting the approach of these inevitable calamities, it is only to be answered, to the complaint of the public, that we ought no more to weary of green lanes in Trafalgar Square than we do in Devonshire or Kent; and, to the disappointment of the artist, that although distinction cannot be, and should not be, conferred by the practice of any particular style,

honesty of aim will always make his labour useful, and his life happy. Distinction, if it is justly won, can of course be won only by superior intellect; a change in the methods or objects of a school does not raise the capacities of the scholars to one level, nor render it more possible than it has been hitherto to be illustrious in large companies. But it ought to be a sufficient reward for much painstaking, if the art we practise guides us into continually greater sense of natural beauty, though that beauty may be manifested to others as well as to us; and enables us to gain an honourable livelihood, though one wholly independent of laurel crowns.

The steady advance of just principles of painting is, however, strangely complicated in the present Exhibition with examples of error or of backsliding. The Pre-Raphaelite cause has been doubly betrayed, by the mistimed deliberation of one of its leaders, and the inefficient haste of another; and we have to regret at once that the pictures of Holman Hunt were too late for the Exhibition, and that those of Everett Millais were in time for it.

We will, as before, glance round the rooms in the order of the catalogue, sometimes breaking the line to go in quest of such pictures as it may be desirable to compare at once with that under consideration.

8. Au Sixième. (J. C. Horsley, A.)

A sweet sketch; we can hardly, in the present stage of general completion, call it more; and I regret this, for the subject is one which would have borne exquisite finish. The *innocent* life of the French grisette, if we may suppose the 'Rigolette' of Eugene Sue to be a type of a large class, is one of the pleasantest to contemplate among all the conditions of labour which are dependent on modern European luxury. Surely, by the way, there should have been flowers at her window, as well as that piece of extravagance, on the table,

into which she has been beguiled at the Marché aux Fleurs. The outlook of the window, also, being 'au sixième' might have been made very interesting; views over Parisian roofs are nearly always so.

14. Narcissus. (W. E. Frost, A.)

The young Dryad on the right gives us an interesting example of ideal grace of action in 'finding' a daffodil. The bough which she raises with her pretty arm has evidently been so extremely in her way, that the only wonder is how, under the oppressive circumstances, she ever found the daffodil at all. Dryads and Naiads are, I suppose, susceptible of shadows only from themselves; as I see the trees cast none upon them. Mr Frost knows best; but if it be so, Dryads and Naids are bad models, and mortal ladies, liable to chiaroscuro, would make better pictures.

28. A Crab and Lobster Shore. (E. W. Cooke, A.)

This very careful study just misses being quite right and quite beautiful for want of a very slight degree of greater watchfulness—*not* greater labour. Merely by way of an instance of the kind of completion wanted, note the shadow of the man most to the right, leaning on the boat. It is a dark-brown shadow on a violet boat; in the probability of which, at that distance, I do not believe, but let that pass; this dark-brown shadow falls not only on the violet-coloured wood, but on a stripe of red paint and on some seams of paler colour. But it crosses all of them, remaining equally dark-brown. Now, a shadow which was rich brown on violet, would be orange-scarlet on crimson, and deep golden-grey on white: and all these changes ought to have been shown in that shadow by separate touches of pure colour. It is an infinitely more important matter that these transitions of hue should be given, than that mere force of chiaroscuro should be reached. A similar though less demonstrable monotony in hue

causes all the careful work on the shore to look coarse. Each pebble is painted with two or three touches of some unvaried colour—usually about two for its bright, and one for its dark side; whereas each side would in Nature, have been infinitely varied with hues either broken into texture, or melting into gradation. No touch of colour is or ever can be right, however small, if it be monotonous; and almost the first point of art with a great workman is getting the colour to palpitate within the touches, mingling it with endless cunning, and never leaving one spot bare, or one hue definable.

39. A Syrian Sheikh. (J. F. Lewis.)

When Mr Lewis sends a picture to the Academy, it ought not to be one which even his truest admirers might easily pass without noticing. I have seen many of his sketches, executed in about three or four hours, which were more interesting than this highly wrought painting, and I am quite sure that he could paint a noble picture, rich in composition, and powerful in rendering of human character, in a couple of months, if he did not wilfully set himself subjects involving minuteness as a chief part of their expression. He has much of the power of Veronese and Tintoret; and yet he takes Van Eyck for his model. Why not, if only by way of practice, paint two bold pictures in the beginning of the year; one for the Water Colour Society, and one for the Academy, and then devote the long days to whatever finishing procedure he chose, on his pet pictures?—these last coming forth, in due or undue time, as it might be; but two vigorous works being, without fail, produced annually. Many reasons occur to me which might be urged in farther recommendation of such a plan; one or two I will state presently, with reference to Mr Lewis's drawing in the Water Colour Exhibition.

41. Interior of Duomo, Milan. (D. Roberts, R. A.)

It must be, I think, nearly ten years, if not more, since Mr Roberts painted so careful a picture. It is entirely true to the scene, and unusually forcible and solemn in the effect of the painted window. But why does Mr Roberts *always* draw painted windows lighter at the top than the bottom. I have often seen them lighter at the bottom than the top: certainly I never saw them, as in No. 418, darker at the bottom than the stone of their jambs; the whole breadth of casement telling as a gloom instead of a light. The tapestry about the pillars in this Milan is thoroughly painted, and the whole picture very enjoyable, as an expression of cathedral splendour, though not of cathedral solemnity.

50. News from Home. (J. E. Millais, A.)

We will pass this for the present; merely asking, as we pass, whether Mr Millais supposes this to be the generally bright aspect of a Highlander on a campaign? or whether he imagines that Highlanders at the Crimea had dress portmanteaus as well as knapsacks, and always put on new uniforms to read letters from home in?

78. Peter the Great. (D. Maclise.)

This is a less exaggerated and more conscientious work than Mr Maclise has yet produced. But I hope his conscience will become keener yet; for it is difficult to understand how a painter who goes through so much hard work can persist in the idea that there is no indistinctness in nature, or that there ought to be none. I have heard it said that Mr. Maclise is singularly far-sighted, and draws more decisively than other painters, in the belief that he sees more clearly. But though his sight had the range of the eagle's, and clearness of the lynx's; though it were as manifold as a dragon-

fly's and as manageable as a chameleon's, there is a limit to his sight, as to all our sights. He may perhaps be able to see that in Mr Inchbold's 'Jungfrau' (at the top of the room, No. 360) the foreground is covered with gentians and Alpine roses; but he cannot count the leaves of the roses, nor the filaments of the moss which embroiders the ground with gold between the gentians' blue. And, as far as in his pictures I am able to compare his power of sight with that of other people, he appears to see, not more, but a great deal less, than the world in general. When we common-place people look from Deptford to the other side of the Thames, we do not see houses like these behind Peter the Great, with blank square patches of grey for their doors and windows. That appearance is precisely the one presented to us by the models of houses which children buy to give their dolls dinner in. But when we look at real houses across the Thames, we see panes in the windows (or rags in them, as the case may be): bricks in the walls (or holes in them); planks in the doors; tiles on the roofs; incidents of all kinds, in form and colour, infinitely rich and abundant: more or less confused, indeed: but this confusion is not with us, the unfortunate plurality, peculiar to distant objects. All natural objects are confused to us, however near, however distant, because all are infinite. Nay, I cannot but think, that if even Mr Maclise looks at a fly upon a wall ten yards from him, he may see clearly that it is a fly, but he will not be able to count the meshes in its wings; and if he looks fairly, and without any previous prejudice, at a girl's hair, however close to him, and however carefully curled, he will find that it verily does not look like a piece of wood carved into scrolls, and French-polished afterwards, as the curls of these observant young English ladies do. The stars, I think, are adverse at present to the painting of hair, and all the immortality that our pretty ladies can hope for in that respect

must be Berenice's or Belinda's; for if Mr Maclise thinks that hair is made of brown wood, the Pre-Raphaelites are all under the strongest conviction that it is made of red sand, and pass great part of their time in endeavours to enter Michael Scott's service, and make, if not ropes, at least locks, out of sea sand. It is not often that I plead for any imitation of the work of bygone days; but, very seriously, I think no pupil should be allowed to pass the examination ordeal of our schools of painting, until he had copied, in a satisfactory manner, a lock of hair by Correggio. Once let him do that with any tolerable success, and he would know to the end of his life both what the word 'painting' meant; and with what flowing light and golden honour the Maker of the human form has crowned its power, and veiled its tenderness.

103. Sacred Song. (S. A. Hart, R.A.)

This is a good study; better in many respects than Mr Hart's larger pictures; but these sacred singers are not Dryads, are they? or has Mr Hart a special theory concerning shadows—to wit, that fingers may cast them on paper, but leaves cannot cast them on foreheads?

107. Titian preparing for his first Essay in Colouring. (W. Dyce, R.A.)

Well done, Mr Dyce, and many times well done! though it is of little use for any of us to say so to you; for when a man has gone through such a piece of work as this, he knows he is right, and knows it so calmly, that it does not matter much to him whether people see it or not. This is a notable picture in several ways, being, in the first place, the only one quite up to the high-water mark of Pre-Raphaelitism in the Exhibition this year; for, although Mr Carrick's (No. 135) is in several respects better painted, there are no difficulties of form and distance presented by his

subject; while Mr Dyce has encountered all discoverable difficulties at once, and chosen a subject involving an amount of toil only endurable by the boundless love and patience which are the first among the Pre-Raphaelite characteristics.

In the second place, this is the first picture yet produced by the school, in which the work has been at all affected by a sculpturesque sense of grace in form. Hitherto, every master who has ranked himself on this side, has been a colourist, and his subject has been chosen and treated with chief reference to colour, not intentionally, but because a colourist can do no otherwise; seeing, in all that he has to show, effects of light and hue first, and form secondarily. I cannot tell how far Mr Dyce is capable of becoming a colourist, but he is not one yet; and although this deficiency is grievously hurtful to his work in many respects, in one it has advantaged it: he has rendered more of the finished grace and lovely composition of line in that oak foliage than has yet been seen in oak; if he could have coloured it better he would have softened its edges, and carried the eye more to gleams of green and shades of purple, slightly losing the lines of leaf and branch; for art always loses something, or else we should not know it from reality, and it is interesting to see, for the first time, in the annals of the rising school, this inevitable loss taking place in colour instead of form; and the landscape painted with a sculptor's precision, and a sculptor's love of grace.

Though, however, we may contentedly part with a little green and purple in oak leaves for the sake of exquisiteness in delineation, we cannot part so lightly with the blood of Titian; no boy could ever have coloured a Madonna's face who had so little colour in his own. And there was not the least need for this failure; because, though I do not think Mr Dyce will ever himself colour like a Venetian, I see, by the way he has painted the flowers and the boy's dress, that he

has quite as much eye for colour as ever Leonardo had, and he may paint flesh quite as well as Leonardo, if he likes.

Only one cavil more. Whatever Ridolfi may say (I have not had time to look), Titian's actual first attempts must have been of a very different kind, and in another order of landscape. It was not in the green, delicate-leaved twilight of a lowland garden, nor among its sweet measurements of level grass, that the boy received his first impressions of colour, but among the strong trunks and rugged ground of the forests of Cadore, and in the dawns beyond its desolate mountains, when the massy clouds stood quiet between the burning and the blue. Nor would it have been a statue such as this which first made him dream of the Madonna ; but rather some fresco of a wayside chapel, where she stood with her hands folded, and the moon under her feet, and the companies of heaven around her, crown above crown, circlet beyond circlet—gleaming golden in the arched shade.

Conceding, however, Mr Dyce's theory of the place, and accepting, with perhaps a little farther demur, the graceful and undisturbed dress of the boy for such as the young Titian was likely to have worn to work in (particularly if the work began with flower-hunting), we may proceed to enjoy the picture heartily in all other respects—the expression of the boy being excellent, and the flowers, grass, leafage, and dress, down to the minutest fold of the purple lining of the cap, painted so that no one need ever hope to do much better.

It will take about an hour to see this picture properly.

135. Thoughts of the future. (R. Carrick).

Quite faultless, as far as I can see ; and one of the best, if not absolutely the best, examples of *balanced* completion which the school has produced. It is intensely difficult to put such finish into the stripes

of pillow and pattern of counterpane, and yet not to let one thread become falsely conspicuous.

It is not, of course, a work involving high powers of invention, and therefore it does not yet place its painter in the highest rank of artists; but as far as it reaches it is right: and I say little of it, only because the subject is simple and the success absolute: it is a picture of which explanation is needless, and criticism impossible.

136. The Mountain Path. (J. T. Linnell.)

Singularly luminous and full of air; Mr Linnell seems to be making the most rapid advances; and has good cause to be happy in the general appreciation of his work; for I notice that almost every person who looks at this picture, enjoys, or praises it.

138. The young Brother. (W. Mulready, R.A.)

Without exception, the least interesting piece of good painting I have ever seen in my life. I call it a 'piece of painting', not a 'picture', because the artist's mind has been evidently fixed throughout on his modes of work, not on his subject—if subject it can be called. Is it not sorrowful to see all this labour and artistical knowledge appointed, by a command issued from the grave to paint—and employed for a couple of years in painting—for the perpetual possession and contemplation of the English people, the ill-laced bodice of an untidy girl? Yet the picture will be a valuable one; perhaps the most forcible illustration ever given of the frivolous application of great powers. For this is not, observe, the commonplace littleness of an inferior mind, nor commonplace wantonness of a great one. We have had examples enough of mean subjects chosen by the trifling, and slight subjects chosen by the feeble: nor is it a new thing to see great intellects overthrown by impetuosity, or wasted in indolence; stumbling and lost among the dark mountains, or lying helpless by the wayside, listless or desolate.

All this we have seen often; but never, I think, till now, patience disappointed of her hope, and conscientiousness mistaken in her aim; labour beguiled of her reward, and discretion warped in her choice. We have not known until now that the greatest gifts might be wasted by prudence, and the greatest errors committed by precision.

For it is quite curious how, throughout this composition, the artist seems to have aimed at showing the uselessness of all kinds of good. There is an exquisite richness of decoration in the pattern of the yellow dress, yet the picture is none the richer for it; an exquisite play of colour in the flesh, yet the girl is none the fairer for it: her dress is loose, without grace; and her beauty hidden, without decency. The colour of the whole is pure, but it does not refresh; its arrangement subtle, but it does not entertain: the child laughs without gaiety; and the youth reclines without repose.

We may be sure, however—which is some comfort—that failure of this total kind *cannot* take place unless there is somewhere a wilful departure from truth: for truth, however ill-chosen, is never *wholly* uninteresting. For instance, here, the sense of country life is destroyed by the false forms of the trees, which are only green horizontal flakes of colour, not foliage; and the dead blue dress of the youth, though it seems at first well painted, is shaded either with pure dark blue, dirty green, or violet, wholly at random, and of course, therefore, with destruction of brilliancy as well as of relief; while the folds of the girl's gown, though they at first look well drawn, are mere angular masses, without either flow or fall.

160. A Signal on the Horizon. (J. C. Hook, A.)

It seems to me that this is the sweetest and most pathetic picture of an English boy that has been painted in modern times; and as for the thought, and choice

of scene, and rendering of expression throughout the picture, they are all so true, so touching, and so lovely, that I do not choose to speak many words about them, lest I should do the reader harm instead of good by some discordant expression; it would need a little finished idyl of Tennyson to express them rightly. But when you have made out all this design at your leisure, go at once to the 'Ship Boy's Letter' (545): for the whole heart of rural England is in that, as of sailor England in the other. Take care to read the direction of the envelope on the ground with the Dover postmark:

'William Dibble . . . Ongar Hatch, Surrey'; and what is legible of the beginning of the letter'

'Off Cape town.

'My dear Father and Mother . . . . . thank God . . dear sister.'

188. At Berncastle, on the Moselle. (G. C. Stanfield.)

There are more signs of present progress and future power in this painting, than in any I have yet seen by the younger Stanfield; it looks like an attentively rendered portrait of the place. The hilly ground in the distance is peculiarly well drawn (and was peculiarly difficult to draw); and the shadow of the cross on the ground is followed with care among the stones, instead of being laid in with random dashes to show cleverness of touch. The place was worth drawing too. That must be an interesting example of cross, with the sculptured Madonna at the foot of it. But Mr. Stanfield must either draw his figures better or worse; he must either make them agreeable, or leave them slight. The oxen and their driver on the left, and the figure with the basket, sitting at the foot of the cross, are precisely types of the worst kind of

figure which it is possible to introduce in landscape, —definitely ill-drawn, and pertinaciously repulsive.

201. A Swiss Meadow in June. (H. Moore.)

I cannot judge of this study, it gives me too much pleasure; but it seems to me *very* perfect in general harmony of light, and the sweet motion of the clouds along the horizon. People are beginning, I see, to feel Switzerland truly at last; and how more may sometimes be done by a single blue mound of pines, like that on the right of this field, than by piled pyramids of rock and snow.

204. Port na Spania. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

I am very glad to see Mr Stanfield's work in this exhibition on a little smaller scale than of late years; and proportionally more careful. This is a most interesting picture; and quite notable for its new conditions of cloud. Usually Mr Stanfield gives us only solid rolling clouds behind his hills; I do not recollect his ever before painting their floating films in front of the crags, whose geology, by the way, seems rendered with the greatest care; and beautifully picturesque geology it is; the horizontal beds of the red and black lavas opposing the pillared precipice at the summit. Two points only seem to me to be regretted; the first, that the turf, half-way up the hill-side, looks like a bank close to the spectator, the overhanging edges having the aspect of one thickness of turf only, though the little yellow and black figures below show us that these turf edges are at least from twelve to twenty feet high. The second, that the ship does not look as if she struck with any force or weight: I cannot get rid of the idea that she is a small model, and, moreover, a small model drawn with no great truth of perspective; I am certain the curves of her stern, where it rises from the deck, are false; if she is strained there, the strain should

have been distinctly shown, and if not, the error in the lines of the starboard side would be demonstrable in a moment, if it were worth while to give a diagram for the purpose.

I like the black box particularly, though it does not look like one that would float. How well Mr Stanfield could colour, if he liked, and took as much pains always as he has with this one dark square! What a gain, too, would it not be to us all, if he did take this trouble! The calm in the Gulf of Salerno, for instance, (371), would be quite a delightful picture, if only the sails had a little sun upon them. Even without sun, I wholly disbelieve in clay colour, either in sails or seamen, or in anything whatever but clay.

213. Sir Roger de Coverley in Church. (C. R. Leslie, R.A.)

Not attractive or interesting at first sight, it will repay an attentive study with continual increase of charm, and of wonderment. It is, of course, not well coloured; but though meagre and cold, it is not coarse; nor, in its own pale key, inharmonious; while the subtleties of expression are endlessly delightful in their delicate mystery. This light touch of Leslie's seems to me to show an immense advance in power since he gave us the somewhat laborious humour of Sancho and the Duchess.

Do not miss the little girl holding up her hands in awe, and delight, at the entire impropriety of behaviour on the part of the swallow, neither by servant nor knight to be touched on his wings, or impressed in his mind.

219. Autumn Morning. (T. Creswick, R.A.)

Well worked; but too complex: the fallen trunk with its bare branches on the right, though its lines, in mere composition, are useful in repeating those of the opposite bank, breaks up the picture by their

number; we did not need so many straggling arms there. Mr Creswick is also always a little too heavily green in foliage: when trees are green at all, they are green to brighter and better purpose.

283. A Dream of the Past. (J. E. Millais, A.)

The high praise which I felt it my duty to give to this painter's work last year was warranted by my observing in it, for the first time, the entirely inventive arrangement of colour and masses, which can be achieved only by the highest intellect. I must repeat briefly here what I have had occasion hundreds of times to explain elsewhere, but never yet often enough to get it generally understood—that painters are broadly divisible into three classes: first, the large class who are more or less affected or false in all their work, and whose productions, however dexterous, are of no value whatever; secondly, the literally true painters, who copy with various feeling, but unanimously honest purpose, the actualities of Nature, but can only paint them as they see them, without selection or arrangement; whose works are therefore of a moderate, but sterling value, varying according to the interest of the subject: lastly, the inventive painters who are not only true in all they do, but compose and relieve the truths they paint, so as to give to each the utmost possible value; which last class is in all ages a very small one: and it is a matter to congratulate a nation upon, when an artist rises in the midst of it who gives any promise of belonging to this great Imaginative group of Masters.

And this promise was very visible in the works of Millais last year; a new power of conception being proved in them—to instance two things among many—by the arrangement of the myrtle branches in the 'Peace', and the play of the colours in the heap of 'Autumn Leaves'. There was a slovenliness and imperfection in many portions, however, which I did

not speak of, because I thought it accidental—consequent, probably, on too exulting a trial of his new powers, and likely to disappear as he became accustomed to them. But, as it is possible to stoop to victory, it is also possible to climb to defeat; and I see with consternation that it was not the Parnassian rock which Mr Millais was ascending, but the Tarpeian. The change in his manner, from the years of 'Ophelia' and 'Mariana' to 1857, is not merely Fall—it is Catastrophe; not merely a loss of power, but a reversal of principle: his excellence has been effaced, 'as a man wipeth a dish—wiping it, and turning it upside down'. There may still be in him power of repentance, but I cannot tell: for those who have never known the right way, its narrow wicket-gate stands always on the latch; but for him who, having known it, has wandered thus insolently, the by-ways to the prison-house are short, and the voices of recall are few.

I have not patience much to examine into the meaning of the picture under consideration. If it has one, it should not have been disguised by the legend associated with it, which, by the way, does not exist in the Romance from which it professes to be quoted, and is now pretty generally understood to be only a clever mystification by one of the artist's friends, written chiefly with the view of guarding the awkward horse against criticism. I am not sure whether the bitterest enemies of Pre-Raphaelitism have yet accused it of expecting to cover its errors by describing them in bad English.

Putting the legend, however, out of question, the fancy of the picture is pretty, and might have been sublime, but that it is too ill painted to be dwelt upon. The primal error in pictorial grammar, of painting figures in twilight as bright as yellow and vermilion can make them, while the towers and hills, far above and far more exposed to light, are yet dark and blue, could hardly have been redeemed by any subsequent

harmonies of tone, much less by random brilliancy: and the mistake of painting the water brighter than the sky which it reflects, though constant among inferior painters in subordinate parts of their work, is a singularly disgraceful one for a painter of standing.

These, and the other errors or shortcomings in the work, too visible to need proving, and too many to bear numbering, are all the less excusable because the thought of the picture was a noble one, and might seem both justly to claim, and tenderly to encourage, the utmost skill and patience in its rendering. It does not matter whether we take it as a fact or as a tpye: whether we look verily upon an old knight riding home in the summer twilight, with the dust of his weary day's journey on his golden armour, taking the woodman's children across the river with him, holding the girl so tenderly that she does not so much as feel the grasp of the gauntlets, but holds the horse's mane as well, lest she should fall; or whether we receive it as a type of noble human life, tried in all war, and aged in all counsel and wisdom, finding its crowning work at last to be bearing the children of poverty in its arms, and that the best use of its panoply of battle is to be clasped by the feeble fingers, wearied with gathering the sheddings of the autumnal woods. It might bear a deeper meaning even than this: it might be an image less of life than of the great Christian Angel of Death, who gives the eternal nobleness to small and great; and clasps the mean and the mighty with his golden armour: Death, bearing the two children with him across the calm river, whither they know not; one questioning the strange blue eyes which she sees fixed on heaven, the other only resting from his labour, and feeling no more his burden. All this, and much more than this—for the picture might be otherwise suggestive to us in a thousand ways—it would have brought home at once to the heart of every spectator, had the idea but been realized

with any steadiness of purpose or veracity of detail: as it stands, it can only be considered as a rough sketch of a great subject, injudiciously exposed to general criticism, and needing both modification in its arrangement and devoted labour in its future realization.

I am sorrowfully doubtful, however, how far Mr Millais may yet be capable of such labour. There are two signs conspicuous in his this year's work, of augury strangely sinister; the first, an irregularity in the conception of facts, quite unprecedented in any work that I know in the Realistic schools of any age; the second, a warped feeling in the selection of facts, peculiar, as far as I know, to Millais from his earliest youth.

I say first an irregularity of conception. Thus it seems only to have struck the painter suddenly, as he was finishing the knight's armour, that it ought to be more or less reflective; and he gives only one reflection in it—of the crimson cloth of the saddle, that one reflection being violently exaggerated: for though, from a golden surface, it would have been, as he has rendered it, warmer than the crimson, no reflection is ever *brighter* than the thing reflected. But all the rest of the armour is wholly untouched by the colour of the children's dresses, or of their glowing faces, or of the river or sky. And if Mr Millais meant it to be old armour, rough with wear, it ought to have been deadened and darkened in colour, hacked with edges of weapons, stained with stains of death; if he meant it merely to be dusty, the dust should have lain white on some of the ridges, been clearly absent from others, and should have been dark where it was wet by the splashing of the horse. The ripple of the water against the horse itself, however, being unnoticed, it is little wonder if the dash of the chance spray is missed. A more manifest sign still of this irregular appliance of mind, is in the fact that the peacock's plume, the bundle of wood, and the stripes of the saddle-cloth

are painted with care; while the children's faces, though right in expression, are rudely sketched, with unrounded edges, half in rose colour and half in dirty brown. Vestiges of his old power of colouring, still unattainable by any other man, exist, however, in that saddle-cloth, and in the peacock's feather. But the second sign, the warping of feeling, is a still more threatening one. The conception of his second picture (408) is an example of the darkest error in judgment—the fatalest failure in the instinct of the painter's mind. At once coarse and ghastly in fancy, exaggerated and obscure in action, the work seems to have been wrought with the resolute purpose of confirming all that the bitterest adversaries of the school have delighted to allege against it; and whatever friendship has murmured or enmity proclaimed, of its wilful preference of ugliness to beauty, is now sealed into everlasting acceptance. It is not merely in manifest things, like the selection of such a model as this for the type of the foot of a Spanish lady, or the monstrous protrusion of the lover's lip in his intense appeal for silence; but the dwelling perpetually upon the harshest lines of form, and most painful conditions of expression, both in human feature and in natural objects, which long ago, when they appeared in Millais' picture of the 'Carpenter's Shop', restrained the advance of Pre-Raphaelitism; and would arrest its advance now, unless there were other painters to support its cause, who will disengage it from unnaturalness of error, and vindicate it from confusion of contempt.

For Mr Millais there is no hope, but in a return to quiet perfectness of work. I cannot bring myself to believe that powers were given to him only to be wasted, which are so great, even in their aberration, that no pictures in the Academy are so interesting as these, or can be for a moment compared with them for occasional excellence and marvellousness of

execution. Yet it seems to be within the purpose of Providence sometimes to bestow great powers only that we may be humiliated by their failure, or appalled by their annihilation; and sometimes to strengthen the hills with iron, only that they may attract the thunderbolt. A time is probably fixed in every man's career, when his own choice determines the relation of his endowments with his destiny; and the time has come when this painter must choose, and choose finally, whether the eminence he cannot abdicate is to make him conspicuous in honour, or in ruin.

355. Bon Jour, Messieurs. (F. Stone, A.)

Thank you, Frank; very heartily thank you. There has not been a greater benefit, in way of pictures, bestowed on us this year. It is good for us, after walking, as walk we must so often, up and down the grey streets of London, watching the gay carriages with the sorrowful faces in them, and the fading beauties, and wasting pleasures, and yet more wasting toils, to remember that within a bird's flight of us, along the top of Calais' cliffs, the fisher's cart-horse trots to market through the morning air; that the idle fisher-boy tosses his limbs behind for gladness; and that fisher-girls are laughing, with a bird's song in every laugh; crowned with sacredness of happy life, and strength of careless peace, and helpful innocence.

442. Morning after a Gale. (E. W. Cooke, A.)

Very awful, after we have looked at it a little while; at least that bronze vessel is so to me—a ship that is not, and yet is, the true spectre ship, whose sight is destruction; nor less so the skeleton of the boat with the wild waves sifting through the bones of her, and the single figure waiting on the desolate ship's deck, and saved by its faithfulness. Was Mr Cooke indeed a little inspired by Turner's great 'Shipwreck'; or is the partial resemblance of arrangement, in the

position of the larger boat and wreck, accidental? I wish he would try to beat Turner in one thing, in which not only Turner but all marine painters whatever to this day are conquerable enough by a little pains—sea *foam*, namely: When shall we have foam as well as waves? It *can* be drawn, not quite rightly, but far better than ever hitherto; and the first painter who succeeds with it, provided he is at all a good artist in other respects, and has not merely found out a trick of foam, will make all bygone sea pieces look like the worn-out canvas waves of a theatre.

501. Montaigne. (H. Wallis.)

Not, I think, quite so successful as the 'Chatterton' of last year; but it contends with greater difficulties, and is full of marvellous painting. It is terribly hurt by its frame, and by the surrounding colours and lights: seen through the hand, the effect is almost like reality. That is a beautifully characteristic fragment of homely French architecture seen through the window.

I should think this picture required long looking at, and that it is seen to greater disadvantage by careless passers by than almost any of its neighbours.

542. Rydal. (J. M. Carrick.)

This is the most important of the various studies from nature, all more or less successful, which surround us in the Academy this year. I am heartily sorry to pass them by, *en masse*, especially as most of them, such as 214, 215, 268, 1136, and others, are incomparably more elaborate and valuable than any thing of the kind I have to notice in the water-colour exhibitions; only the water-colour draughtsmen have more power in educating public taste, partly from reputation and partly from the pleasantness of water-colour as a decoration of rooms; so that I can give no more time to these oil studies, various and beauti-

ful as they are. This large one is most reverent in its fidelity to the reflections of the quiet lake, most skilful in its rendering of the dim light on the distant hills. I never have seen retiring distance, in light of this kind, so well rendered. The stream has been studied with equal care; but it is impossible to paint clear running water ripple by ripple: some conventionality of freedom must be allowed always.

556. The going down to Nazareth. (W. C. T. Dobson.)

Very tender in expression, but commonplace; and in general idea more or less false or improbable. Mr Dobson must see to it, or he will be cast away on the rock of Purism; he is already, both in this picture and the 'Reading the Psalms' (No. 63), more infected than he was last year by the great Purist theory of the sanctity of clay colour. Now it is precisely clay and its colour which are the least sacred things in the world; because all heavenly effort or action whatever is a conquest of the clay; from the first conquest of it by the breath of life, to the last conquest of it by the baptism with fire; and in the least things as in the greatest, it is fire and its colour which are sacred—not dust. These imperfect religious painters, headed and misguided by Ary Scheffer, are all just like Naaman; they think they cannot worship rightly unless there 'be given unto thy servant two mules' burden of earth'.

562. Waiting for the Verdict. (A. Solomon.)

Very full of power; but rather a subject for engraving than painting. It is too painful to be invested with the charm of colour.

597. Ploughing at Seville. (R. Ansdell.)

More interesting than cattle pieces are generally; but without special merit of any kind, and quite out

of its proper place. Why should work like this be on the line ?—unless the pictures are treated as furniture only, and the black masses in this case set off the room ; I believe there is an arbitrary rule about the size of animals, which allows those drawn to a diminished scale to be on the line, but mercilessly raises those which like Landseer's (77) are of life size ; I believe all such rules to be very harmful. Good work should be put near us, whatever its scale ; and we ought to be able at our ease to study the wonderful execution of the fur in Landseer's large grey mountain hare, and to see, without a telescope, that there *is* a hare in Mr Oakes' exquisite Welsh foreground (596). How foolish we shall think ourselves, when once we get rooms where we can put our year's pictures every one in a good place, for ever having done painters all this injustice, and brought upon ourselves all this discomfort, merely for want of a furlong or two more of wall, and waste ground !

602. Autumn Flowers. (Miss A. F. Mutrie.)

This lady's work is always beautiful ; but there is some incongruity between the luxuriant evidence of education in the group of central flowers, and the roughness of the ferny bank they rest upon. All true lovers of art, or of flowers, would rejoice in seeing a bank of blossoms fairly painted ; but it must be a bank with its *own* blossoms, not an unexpected picnic of polite flowers in the country. Neither need the sky be subdued in colour. I believe the most beautiful position in which flowers can possibly be seen is precisely their most natural one ; low flowers relieved by grass or moss, and tree blossoms relieved against the sky. How it happens that no flower-painter has yet been moved to draw a cluster of boughs of peach blossom, or cherry blossom or apple blossom, just as they grow, with the deep blue sky between every bud and petal, is more than I can understand ; except that I

know, in art, the likeliest and properest thing for every body to do is almost always the last that will be done.

614. Adopting a Child. (F. B. Barwell.)

A well considered and expressive picture; somewhat hurt by the unmanageable phenomena of modern life, in dress and book-cases; which are the more to be regretted, because the arrangement of purple and green in the mother's shawl shows that Mr Barwell could produce majestic pieces of colour with other materials. It tells its story plainly enough; but if the spectator passes hastily, he might nevertheless miss the indication of the reason for the adoption, in the portrait of their own lost child, which hangs behind the parents; and to which the girl, shrinking from them to her mother's side, evidently bears a close resemblance.

994. When the Leaves begin to turn. (A. W. Hunt.)

Consummate in easy execution and blended colour; there is nothing else like it this year. The subject is ill chosen, being confused in mass and incapable of effective treatment; but, taken merely as a study. birch foliage and mossy stones *cannot* be done better. I do not know what kind of feelings the inferior painters, of such subjects have, whose works, by chance or right, are on the line this year in the principal rooms; but I think that if I had painted some of those well-shown foregrounds I would rather have dashed my hand through my picture at once, than have left it in a good place while such a work as this was on the ground. No. 761, by the same hand, is a very remarkable drawing, and the best study of sky that I can find this year; notable especially for its expression of the *consumption* of the clouds—not their driving away, but melting away, in the warmer air. A third work, 566, apparently the most important of the three, is hung out of sight.

The writer of the judicious and interesting criticism which has this year given so beneficial a direction to the authority of *The Times*, in matters of art, has anticipated nearly all I had to say on the subject of Portraiture [1], except in one particular. Some expressions in the paper of Wednesday last, respecting the tiresomeness of *conventional* backgrounds, might be construed by a hasty reader into general blame of *distinctness* or completion in backgrounds; and this was not, I believe, what the writer meant; certainly not what he ought to have meant. The accessories of a portrait should be completely painted, both for the sake of their artistical use, and explanatory power. Distinctness and force of collateral masses are of the greatest use in relieving the more delicate gradations of colour in a well painted face; and the greatest portrait-painters, Titian, Veronese, Velasquez, and Raphael, introduce the most trenchant, clear, and complete backgrounds. Indeed the first three so rejoiced in quantity of accessories, that, when engaged on important portraits, they would paint large historical pictures merely by way of illustration or introduction. The priceless Veronese, which I rejoice to hear has been just secured for the nation, the Triumph of Alexander, was painted only to introduce portraits of the Pisani; and chiefly to set off to the best advantage the face of one fair girl. Generally speaking, if a painter is great, he will find his background serviceable in proportion to its space; and although, in modern portraiture, splendour of background is rarely possible or suitable, its *definiteness*

[1] My notes on the pictures of Millais might also have been shortened, if I could have anticipated the careful analysis given in *The Times*; but as they were in corrected type before the appearance of the Wednesday's paper, I left them as they were written, the coincidence in the points chosen for animadversion being confirmatory of the justice of the independent criticisms.

should always be insisted upon; not only because it tends to make the manner of the work better throughout, but because accessories, rightly designed, are explanatory of character; and we like, or ought to like, better to see a man in whom we are interested, sitting in his favourite room and accustomed chair, than isolated among the sullen fogs or idle fancies of idealism.

I cannot speak of Architecture, as it would need the dwelling at length on almost inexplicable details; but I take leave to wish the good people of Halifax joy of their Town-hall (1073), that is to be, I hope, pleading only with Mr Scott for a little interference of some sort with the lines of quatrefoils in its roof (1067); and I ought not to speak of Sculpture, because I have little pleasure in it when unconnected with architecture: so that I only go into the sculpture-room to look at my friends' works—such as Mr Munro's bust of Dr Acland (1280), which I hope I am not wrong in thinking beautiful; or Mr Woolner's medallion of Carlyle (1370), which I know I am not wrong in thinking like. It is much to be regretted that Mr Woolner's highly wrought bust of Tennyson was not sent here instead of to Manchester, as we might then have compared in it, and in Mr Brodie's (1354), two conceptions of the noble head, each containing elements which are wanting in the other.

But what a dark sign it is of the state of our architectural schools that there should never be seen in this room one example of sculpture applicable to external decoration, or subordinated to an architectural use!

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

THERE is a general character manifested in the pretty and richly decorated room of this Society, which appears to me deserving of some serious consideration before we take note of any of the drawings separately.

Here are three hundred and four drawings by forty-seven [1] painters, many of them elaborately finished, all showing that the artists have given their complete energy to them; and among the three hundred and four there is not *one* which expresses, or summons, a serious thought. There are, indeed, a few love passages, but they reach no farther than an anxious look or a joyful hesitation. There are the children in the wood, shown by gaslight in the middle of moonlight, and there is a tearful pilgrim, with a superb scallop, and a staff which it is to be hoped, as he is an old man, that during most of his pilgrimage somebody else has carried for him. There is an angel under great difficulties in appearing to the shepherds, in consequence of their unanimously refusing to look at him: and there are two pretty fancies, of a peasant's return, in summer night, to his cottage among the deep corn; and a fisherman's, in stormy summer dawn, to his cottage on the shore. I think these are all that are so much as intended to be pathetic or suggestive.

Now there must be, of course, a certain proper and healthy demand in London, every spring, for pictures which mean nothing, just as there is for strawberries

[1] Why I say three hundred and four instead of three hundred and seventeen will appear presently.

and asparagus. We do not want to be always philosophical, and may wisely ask for and enjoy a certain average number of paintings of roses and quinces, of showers and sunbeams, of beaches where we bathe, and glens where we shoot or clamber. All this is perfectly right and refreshing; nevertheless, a Society which takes upon itself, as its sole function, the supply of these mild demands of the British public, must be prepared ultimately to occupy a position much more corresponding to that of the firm of Fortnum and Mason, than to any hitherto held by a body of artists; and to find their art becoming essentially a kind of Potted Art, of an agreeable flavour, suppliable and taxable as a patented commodity, but in no wise to be thought of or criticized as *Living* art. For living art, or art at all, properly so called, never has been, nor can be, developed in answer to a demand of this inferior kind; nor is it possible even for a simple landscape-painter to treat any of his simplest subjects worthily, unless, as he passes through the world, other things strike his eyes and fancy than the mere pleasantnesses of its outward aspect. Every form and colour bears new meaning to us, as soon as we begin to understand the greater purposes of life, and to feel the interest of its events. We may stand aside from both, set no hand to any but our own quiet work, pass our days in happy ramble or rest, sketch-book in hand, among the innocent glens and by the silent shores; but if, meantime, we are incapable of such reflection as shall make us know, in the depth of those glens, and in the cry of the herd of waves about the beach, their true connection with the thoughts, and joys, and sorrows of men, we never shall paint one leaf nor foam-wreath rightly.

I said just now, that the drawings in the room were three hundred and four only, because I wished to make separate reference to those of Mr David Cox. I believe the health of this artist does not admit of his now

devoting much labour to his pictures; and therefore that we ought not to class them among the other works, as representative of *effort*, but rather as expressions of the feeling of a painter's mind at rest. Be this as it may, they form a complete exception to the general law of failure in sentiment, of which I have been speaking. They are deeply pathetic; and, as far as they reach, exquisitely harmonious in tone: the Caernarvon, in its warm grey walls and dark sea, and the Bolton Abbey [1], in its melancholy glow of twilight, are strangely true, and deeply felt. But there is not any other landscape which comes near these works of David Cox in simplicity or seriousness.

Perhaps the Highland Scene, No. 11, by Richardson, may be taken as giving the clearest example of this fault, in the work of a very clever artist. Mr Richardson is gradually gaining in manual power, and opposes cobalt and burnt sienna very pleasantly. But he seems always to conceive a Highland landscape only as a rich medley of the same materials—a rocky bank, blue at one place and brown at another; some contorted Scotch firs, some fern, some dogs, and some sportsmen: the whole contemplated under the cheering influence of champagne, and considered every way delightful. The Highlands *are* delightful, but, for the most part, in another way than this. I do not regret that Mr Richardson has given this one reading of them, the reading that pleasantly occurs to an active youth in his long vacation; but there ought to be, on the walls, the other readings, too, of those desolate glens, with the dark-brown torrents surging monotonously among their lower rocks, cutting them into the cup-like pools where the deep stream eddies like black oil, and the moth, fallen weary out of the wind on its surface, circles round and round, struggling vainly;

[1] No. 299. The degree of light and warmth obtained on the ruins by the use of subdued colour is by much the most instructive thing, to me, in the exhibition.

of the little spaces under the fern where the glen widens, and the sward is smooth as if for knights' lists, and sweet as if for dancing of fairies' feet, and lonely as if it grew over an enchanted grave; of those low alder thickets, set in soft shade where the stream is broad by the stepping-stones—the drowned lamb lying on the bank, under their stooping leaves, since the last flood; of those sweet winding paths through the oat-fields, and under the ash-trees, where the air breathes so softly when the berries are blush-scarlet in the setting sun; and more softly still when the cold, clear, northern light dies over the purple ranges jagged and wild. Are not these seen everywhere? and seen day by day, and yet never thought upon; felt, I believe, more at his heart by the half-starved shepherd boy, than by the skilfullest of our painters. And I am the more sorry that Mr Richardson does not yet feel the expression in Highland scenery, because I think there may be traced considerable power of composition in the passages of these distant hills; and the large piece of rock on the left is very nearly well drawn: in fact, the old established system of taking out triangles of light, and laying on sharp edges of darkness, has been nearly perfected by Mr Richardson, and does so much more in his hands than most other people's, that if he ever determines to draw in a pure and right way, I should think he would reach far. He seems to have a good eye for colour; there is a very pretty piece of speckled grey in the square rock on the right at the bottom: but he is not at the slightest trouble to fit the colours of shadows to the lights, or of dark sides to light sides: and his ungrammatical brilliancy will therefore always look only like what it is—very pretty warm colour, but never like sunshine. It is worth while to stand midway between the screens on this side of the room, and look alternately from this drawing to Mr Fripp's (37), which is very true in relations of sun and shadow colour. Mr Richardson's will perhaps, even after

many glances, be thought the prettier drawing; but only in Mr Fripp's will be seen the Highland sun and air.

And Mr Richardson is the less to be excused for not entering completely into Highland character, because he can enter into no other. He has fallen so passively into the habit of drawing rocks in sharp angles, and a wild litter of fern and grass among them, that he can compose a landscape of no other materials; and we find 'Catanzaro, the capital of Calabria' (94), looking like a number of models of Italian buildings, erected by some imaginative Highland proprietor in Rosshire.

18. Corn-field, near Hastings. (C. Davidson.)

Very true and modest; as are all Mr Davidson's works. His companion picture (39) gives me a great desire to go hay-making in Sussex this summer. What a lovely field that must be!

37. Scene at the Head of Glencoe. (G. Fripp.)

This drawing has just missed being an exceedingly fine one: the glow of red light on the hills on the right is perfectly imagined; the slightest more gradation in it, and a purer touch or two at the brightest part, would have brought it into great beauty. The cows are individually stiff, but excellently put in place. The whole is full of genuine work, and real look of Highlands.

126. 'On the Derwent' is also very warm with sweet sunshine; but Mr Fripp lets his colours get awkwardly entangled at the edges among his distant hills: he ought to use them much more neatly, and keep them purer, and draw more carefully. His *aim* in drawing is very right indeed; the rock structure in those Glencoe masses being quite true, only messed a little in the working.

45. Val St Nicolas. (J. D. Harding.)

I am glad to see the works of this master again in this room; but they do not look quite so distinct from the rest as they used to be: they are, if I mistake not, looser and flatter in touch than in old times. This is a clever drawing; but Mr Harding need not hope to draw Switzerland on these cheap terms. The flanks of the Alps are by no means films of blue colour, but very substantial and sturdy masses of chestnuts and walnuts, of corn-fields and vineyards, of black pines and green meadows; all positively declaring themselves for pines, walnuts, corn, and grass; and requiring as such to be drawn; on peril, otherwise, of instant loss both of character in the nearer scene, and of height in the peaks beyond. If you hide the upper range of mountains in this drawing with your hand, you will find the lower one forms a very satisfactory distance; as such, the superimposed hills merely dwarf and encumber *it*; while, had it been drawn with its true detail, it would, on the contrary, have exalted *them*.

57. Glenarm, County Antrim. (H. Gastineau.)

There is a great deal of daylight and air in this picture and Mr Gastineau's work is taking at present rather a peculiar position on the walls, as almost alone representative of the old pure water-colour painting, executed without much subsequent sponging for texture, or body-colour washes and dashes. This drawing, as well as the more vigorous 'St Maurice', is very pure in execution, and has in consequence a pleasant unaffected character not otherwise attainable.

61. Sunset. Winter: a Black Frost. (C. Branwhite.)

This painter has, for some time back, shown considerable ability, but he must not hope to reach any sterling qualities without much closer study of nature. It is really high time considering how many treatises

are written on perspective and optics, that our painters should understand, once for all, the difference between shadows and reflections; and that, as some five or six hundred pictures of pretension are painted annually, with reflection of sun or moon in water, it should be generally understood that the reflection of the sun does not radiate, any more than that of a white ball or a white wafer radiates; but that it is either a circle (in *absolutely* calm water), an oval, more or less elongated (in partly disturbed water), or, under certain circumstances, especially when the sun is low, a vertical pillar, more or less broken; each of these images spreading in flakes to right and left when there is much agitation in the water, but always rather narrowing than widening to the spectator's feet.

64. One of Nature's Ferneries. (J. P. Naftel.)

It looks like a true portrait of a beautiful spot, almost tropical or antediluvian in its ferny richness; and both this and Mr Naftel's other drawings seem wrought with a real love of nature, and a pleasant sense of daylight colour, without any affectation, or desire to attract attention by trickeries. But I think Mr Naftel has yet to do some massy and stern work in light and shade, and to discipline himself in point-drawing, before he will be able to express himself as he would like to do, and may do.

The two subjects, 64 and 96, are exquisitely pretty; but I believe it will be generally found that no *merely* pretty place is fit for pictorial treatment. Into all good subjects for painters' work, either human feeling must enter by some evidence of cultivation, or presence of dwelling-place, or of ruin; or else there must be some sublime features indicative of the distress as well as the beauty of nature. I think this law admits of no exception, but I have not space, here, to explain or apply it.

130. Faust's First Sight of Margaret. (F. Burton.)

I am at a loss to know why this picture is in a central position; it possesses no special merit of any kind; the face of Margaret is pretty, but wholly untouched by the feeling which prompts her first sharp answer: 'I am neither a lady, nor pretty, and can go home by myself.' For the rest, it is simply a stage dress and a stage stride; and the colouring is more false and crude than that of almost any picture in the room. The red of the cloak, for instance, is daubed about at random, coming bright in the shadow or dirty in the light, as chance will have it. I entirely dislike Faust, and am sick of illustrations of it; but I wonder whether any painter will ever do it so much justice as to represent Mephistopheles with the face of a man who could either tempt or deceive.

211, 222. Welsh Bridge and Torrent. (G. Dodgson.)

I like Mr Dodgson's sketches (they hardly claim to be more) better than *any* landscape work here, David Cox's only excepted. There is very great perception of colour in them, and evidently entire fidelity to his subject. The stream in 222 is the only genuine piece of torrent-drawing in the exhibition; all the rest are done by recipe, so much scratch and so much dash; this is a hard and steady try at a real stream in flood. Mr Dodgson's fern-drawing, too, is much more subtle than any one else's; his ferns are not merely green central rods, with so many green arms on each side, but real, crisped, quaint, varied leaves, with personal character in them. Still his work only reaches a certain length, and he seems quite careless in choice of subject. I hope he will some day choose more scrupulously, and finish more carefully.

217, 244. (F. W. Topham.)

The delicate feeling and expression in these two drawings induce me to hope that Mr Topham may produce

works of sterling quality if he continues to aim at points of character. As paintings, both are somewhat thin and incomplete, being too much wrought with broad flat washes; very good things for grounds, but wholly incapable of producing any right result without severe drawing above them. The girl's head in 217 is, however, very pretty, and satisfactorily finished.

302. Hareem Life. (J. F. Lewis.)

Though this drawing represents but a small portion of the year's labour of the master (it being only through untoward chance that it has no companion), it may give rise to some serious question how far the conscientiousness of completion ought to be allowed to extend. I know well that Lewis could not have satisfied himself with less than the exquisite accomplishment of every detail which he has given us here; nay, I know that he is not satisfied even with what he has given, and would forbid me that word 'accomplishment', if he saw it being written. But it seems to me questionable how far he ought to consult his own satisfaction; still more questionable whether so much invention, toil, intensity of observation and of mechanical skill should be trusted to one poor little piece of white linen film, fifteen inches square. If water colour were infusible enamel, if the ground were a thick plate of beaten gold, if the English public were ready to receive a noble picture as a rich treasure, and take the charge of it as a weighty trust, we might reasonably ask Mr Lewis to finish his work with his full strength, and make it right, at any cost. But now, when the mildew of winter and sunshine of summer, the city's smoke and country's frost, are alike sure to do fatal work, within a very short series of years, on the plurality of works executed in these delicate materials, and either exposed to the dusty honours of modern exhibitions, or condemned to the humid seclusion of the drawing-room when the family are 'out of town', it seems to

me mere waste of intellect to bestow so much labour on a single drawing: surely the chances of safety, such as they are, might be multiplied; and six or seven drawings of less elaborate but equally admirable execution, might at once educate the public eye by their diffusion, and fall, perhaps, one or two out of the six, into the possession of persons who would seriously value, and safely guard them. No one is less disposed than I to advocate any loose or sketchy methods of painting; but there is a firm, adequate, and manly execution, such as that adopted by the Venetian painters when they were in a hurry, which, while expressing a perfect conception of the finished object, and reaching as deep and substantial colour as more elaborate work, yet attains its ends at once with a magician's speed, and a wise steward's economy. The practice of such modes of expression has great tendency to enlarge the range of thought and give majesty to its tones; for there is something elevating in the very habit of scorning our own work; and, frequently, grander things were done by Titian or Giorgione, when they were filling a spare panel in a corner of a refectory, or colouring, half in play, the bit of plaster left between two ugly window-sills of a friend's house, than when they were bringing all their science and skill to bear on some beloved design in their painting-rooms.

And there is this farther advantage about a rough piece of work, that time, or chance injury, cannot so grievously affect it as they can a more delicate one. Nothing is so painful as to see what has once been exquisitely complete, become spotted, or scratched, or faded. But a rough chalk sketch, or a bold and massively cast fresco, will bear many a stain and scar, and fail in many a flake of colour, without materially losing its power over our minds. If the slightest spot or injury touched the trelliswork and drapery in Lewis's pictures, no one would ever be able to look at them again till they had been 'restored'; and still

less, after such restoration, any one who knew the master's work.

In the case of Lewis, there is this farther reason for pleading for quicker work, that his invention and power over character are more distinctive even than his subtle execution. Van Eyck realized pure detail quite up to the mark of this picture, and in passages needing air tone, or transparency of darkness, considerably farther; but Van Eyck could not arrange masses of drapery as these are arranged, still less could he have given all her tigerish strength and cruel waywardness to the couchant cat, or laid in the same grace of languid opalescence the filaments of the peacock's plume. But all this might have been done, and done quite as greatly, in three days instead of three months; and perhaps a higher kind of excellence generally reached by the master, if he thought now more of arrangement and character than of absolute finish. He can never, after bringing himself up to this perfectness, paint carelessly or slightly; but there *is* a chance of his losing the great harmonies of his compositions, and even some of his power over the expression of human features, if he spends too much time on golden fringes and wall mosaics.

I believe the face of the principal figure in this picture is unfinished; at all events, I am quite sure the master will see cause for altering it, after his eye has been turned for a little while to other subjects. Both the faces are too grey, and this one is somewhat wanting in retiring shadow, and in distinctness of the sides, so that it looks flat. The cat is wholly magnificent in action, but not quite furry or silky enough in her coat. She looks as if she had put pomade on her fur.

NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

THERE is more sincerity of aim, now, in this body of artists than in the elder Society; though a sincerity which shows itself chiefly in the way which is least interesting—in mere studies and sketches from nature, not in landscape design, nor in figure pieces; so that it is impossible to take note of all the simple though meritorious drawings which have been produced by them this year, without wearying the reader by mere repetitions of quiet praise. I can only allow myself the pleasure of referring to one or two principal or characteristic works. I will not go formally round the room, but name them as I remember them.

152. At Pallanza. (T. L. Rowbotham.)

Without bringing forward this drawing as in any wise an example of great art, it yet possesses one character which distinguishes it, to my mind, very honourably from many by masters of more power or pretension. I think Mr Rowbotham loves the Lago Maggiore, and was thinking of Lago Maggiore and not of himself all the while he was painting. If he makes the blue of the water a little too bright, or the draperies of the houses too gay, it is not so much to make his picture conspicuous, as to reach, if by any means he may, the standard of his own memories of the lovely lake and shining village. And I think this a precious character in work; while it is also a rarer

one than we imagine; for it is quite possible to be much more faithful to natural detail than Mr Rowbotham is, and yet to be faithful only in pride, for the sake of showing how accurate we can be; and then the accuracy, somehow or another, always becomes of no use. It is also quite possible to paint on better principles than Mr Rowbotham does, and yet to care for nothing but principles all the while; whereas I see plainly that this artist does at heart care chiefly for the misty mountains and the deep lake; and is trying to make us care for them too. Which I think, also, he succeeds in doing, very sufficiently. This is very like Pallanza, though it is not everybody who will believe that it is; but Italian lakes are indeed as blue, Italian towers in morning sunshine as white, as these; and when I said just now the blue was too bright, I did not mean it was too pure, but that it was not dark enough. Another time, if Mr Rowbotham will carry his pier a little deeper down into the water, and show the stones more darkly beneath the increasing blue, he will find the effect is truer; though very good, even now. Note the two floating bits of wood at the shallow edge, and the three ranges of the shore-cast weed and shingle, not tide-marks, but evidences that the south-west wind blew warm with rain on the St Gothard a few days ago, raising the lake's level with soft melting of snow, from which level it has ebbed a little since in these sunny mornings.

Mr Rowbotham would do well, however, to study the laws of reflection in coloured water more than he has hitherto. They are very curious and subtle; and it is quite absurd not to ascertain them, for he has nothing to do but to dissolve a little Prussian blue in water in a white basin, and set a few rose leaves, and tulip leaves, and sticks floating in it, and he may study every change in hue and fantasy of reflection at his ease; afterwards applying the principles he thus ascertains to his boats, and oars, and awnings.

285. The Kabyle Mountains at Sunset. (Charles Vacher.)

The rocks and aloe on the left are very beautifully drawn, the tone of the distant mountains most true, and all the effects more delicately felt than hitherto in this painter's work. He bids fair to occupy a separate field in the painting of evening light (compare Nos. 15, 217, &c.), corresponding closely to that which was once occupied by George Robson. But Mr Vacher should not draw figures; they will waste his time, and distract his attention from parts of his subjects in which he succeeds better.

134. The Upper Wye. (Thomas Lindsay.)

This I remember, because the piece of river bed is so quaintly chosen; so different from anything which sketchers usually stay at. It would be a most poetical subject if well carried out; but Mr Lindsay's skill is not quite up to the need.

103. Trebarwith Sands. (S. Cook.)

Mr Cook has a very fine eye for colour, and great understanding of sea. I like all his drawings exceedingly. This seems on the whole the leading one; the rosy sunlight opposing the strength of the green waves very beautifully.

201. San Clemente. (Venice.)

Not a very good drawing, but it stays in my memory because it *is* like Venice; and any such likeness is the most difficult thing in the world to find; for Venice always unsettles painters' wits; no place was ever so fit to be painted truly, or so fated to be painted falsely.

190. Early Spring. (Thomas Sutcliffe.)

Compare 197. Both are very earnest studies; but only to be considered as such, and of too difficult

subjects to be quite successful in Mr Sutcliffe's present stage of power. When a young painter first goes to nature, he is sure to be charmed by her intricacy in far away places; and he sets himself to paint what he likes best, not what is best for him. The simpler his choice the better; the door of a cottage, or a rose-bush in its garden, rather than the opening of a glen, or the aisle of a forest.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

It would of course be useless to enter into separate examination of the works produced by this Society, at the time when the interest of the public is concentrated on other exhibitions. I sincerely regret this, for many of the drawings which I have had occasion to notice above are entirely inferior in skill, and works of very slight interest or power, compared to the oil paintings in Suffolk Street. Still I should vainly endeavour now to attract attention to them, and can only therefore allude, gratefully for my own part, to the elaborate studies of clear streams and rocky mountains, by Mr Boddington, Mr Pettit, and Mr West. The Nos. 158, 195, 223, 346, 347, 351, and 561 were all full of interest and high in merit; the rock-drawing peculiarly good, and careful. I had not time to examine them carefully enough to justify me in assigning precedences; only I may say that I liked the last best, for its quiet colour and beautiful setting of the trees on the distant hillsides, as well as the delight evidently felt by the painter in the clearness of the water.

153. Il Ritorno della Contadina. (E. Eagles.) was most carefully balanced, and successful in its effect of light—and pretty in thought. Two studies by Mr Smallfield (737: 'Little Peggy' and 760: 'An Itinerant Shoeblack') showed very great feeling, and, I hope, promise of high power; and 'A Bird's-nest' by Mr W. Ward (76) was by much the most wonderful example of Dutch sharpness and minuteness of execution that I have seen this year; only Mr Ward must aim more at getting true relations of shade in his large masses; he loses himself in detail.

In the British Institution, I cannot forget the marvellous effect of light on snow, and the truthful drawing of its wreaths and icicles in Mr Wolf's 'Covey' (255). The effect, however, was greatly dependent on distance; and could hardly be seen in the narrow room.

FRENCH EXHIBITION

I DO not like to speak much of the French exhibition, because there are characters in the work of every nation which need to be long and specially studied, before a foreigner can do justice to them; and I have not yet been able to give serious study to the French modern school. Two things, however, must strike every one: the general deadness of colour, associated with softness of outline, which seem to be enforced upon their feebler painters, and delighted in by their stronger ones. I had intended to try to get at the principle of this, to consider what harm or good was in it; but I have been hindered hitherto, and see no hope of my ever getting liberty in that room to think of, or look at, anything but the six pictures of Edouard Frère. There are, I see well enough, one or two consummate pieces by other men: the 'Doctor's Visit' (136), for instance, by Emile Plassan, is as perfect and finished as work or thought well can be; and Trayer's 'Convalescent' (155), and several other such, show, in various degrees, a peculiar ease in getting at their point, which makes our English efforts, however successful, look clumsy and forced by comparison. But I cannot tell how I am ever to say what I want to say about Frère's pictures; I can find no words tender enough, nor reverent enough. They have all beauty, without consciousness; dignity, without pride; lowliness, without sorrow; and religion, without fear. Severe in fidelity, yet, as if by an angel's presence, banishing all evil and pain; perfect in power, yet seeming to reach his purpose in a sweet feebleness, his hand failing him for fullness of heart; swift to seize the passing thought

of a moment in a child's spirit, as a summer wind catches a dead rose-leaf before it falls, yet breathing around it the everlasting peace of heaven; he will do more for his country, if he can lead her to look where he looks, and to love as he loves, than all the proud painters who ever gave lustre to her state, or endurance to her glory. What truer glory has she than in these her village children? I cannot choose among such pictures, nor reason of them, though, perhaps, the reader may be surprised at my caring so much for what seems slight in work, and poor in colour. But its very poverty and slightness are, in some sort, a part of its beauty: at least if this painting be imperfect, I have never seen perfect painting do so much; and I believe that only the man who can conceive these pictures knows how he ought to paint them. The beautiful 'Student' (61) is, perhaps, the most finished, just because it is the least pathetic; the three other more important ones, the 'Luncheon', the 'Sempstress', and the 'Prayer', are certainly three of the most touching poems that were ever yet written, and, I believe, by far the most lovely ever yet painted, of lowly life. Who could have believed that it was possible to unite the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico?

The first named of these pictures is the most wonderful; but perhaps the 'Prayer' is the one which will be most easily understood, and will best teach the spectator how to enter into the character of the rest. It needs no telling of it; surely it will speak for itself: the little bare feet kept from the stone-cold by the nightgown which the mother has folded for them, bared of their rough grey stockings, as reverently, and as surely in God's presence, as if the poor cottage floor were the rock of Sinai; the close cap over the sweet, pointed, playful, waving hair, which the field-winds have tossed and troubled as they do the long meadow-grass in May, and yet have not

unsmoothed one wave of its silken balm, nor vexed with rude entangling one fair thread of all that her God numbers, day by day; the dear, bowed, patient face, and hands folded, and the mother's love that clasps them close in a solemn awe, lest they should part or move before her Father's blessing had been given in fullness.—Return to it, and still return. It should be the last picture you look at in all the year; carrying the memory of it with you far away through the silence of the thatched villages, and the voices of the blossoming fields.

NOTES ON SOME OF
THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES
EXHIBITED IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY,
THE OLD AND NEW SOCIETIES OF
PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS, THE
SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, AND
THE FRENCH EXHIBITION

No IV: 1858

PREFACE

In a temperate and candid critique which appeared last year in *The Economist*, and expressed, as I have since found, the feelings of many readers respecting this publication, complaint was made of its imperfection as a record of the art of the season; and it was truly alleged that many pictures of merit were passed without notice, and many of demerit without blame. But the writer surely could not have considered what would be involved in an endeavour to give a complete account of the exhibitions of the year. If there is any truly original power in a picture—nay, if it shows even any considerable quantity of good work and effort, it takes me at least half an hour to form judgment of it; and if it is a *great* picture, I want the half-hour twice or three times over on different days; and the time so spent is laboriously spent—in finding out as far as I can, first, what the painter is trying for, then in comparing his way of trying for it with this and the other condition of art already existing, and considering what likelihoods of success or error are involved in his present mode of work: determining not so much what the real facts are about the picture, which I can generally tell pretty soon, as how many of those facts the painter or the public ought to be told. Often a picture of merit is passed without notice, because it has heavy faults which, if I spoke of it at all, it would be necessary to point out in a way which might discourage and harm the painter more than the idea that his picture had been overlooked by chance. Often pictures of great demerit are passed silently, because there is no hope for their painters, and the kind of error they

have fallen into may be pointed out quite as usefully in other cases, without multiplying offence. Sometimes I pass over names of great reputation, because my estimate of their work is in opposition so direct to the public estimate of it that such influence as I might otherwise possess would only be weakened by expressing it; and sometimes I permit myself silence about personal friends who are doing the public little harm by their pictures, and whose friendship I should be sorry to lose. But the real and chief reason for my not speaking of such and such pictures is my not having had time to look at them. This pamphlet must, if it is to be useful, be printed within seven or eight days after the opening. Two of those days are needed for press correction and binding; five remain: that is to say—three for looking and two for writing. I can neither look nor write for more than eight hours a day; which, allowing an average of a quarter of an hour to each picture, enables me even to *look* at no more than a hundred out of the thousand in the Academy; and the first choice of this hundred, out of which those to be written of must be finally chosen, of course depends, in some degree, on accident: the eye is often caught by something bright or energetic, with semblances of right, and it takes a minute or two to make quite sure there is nothing in it—and many minutes in the aggregate are thus lost; or a noble and quiet picture may have got entangled in a company so contemptible that one passes it in a fit of indignation about its neighbours. But all this is unavoidable—nor is it to be regretted. It is precisely this losing sight here and there of a really good picture which permits me to lose sight also of the bad ones, when it is desirable to do so—nobody knowing whether the picture has been disliked or overlooked. Take the pamphlet simply for what I stated it to be, in the preface to the first that was issued—a circular letter to my friends about the pictures that most interest me in

my first glance at the exhibition—and it will be found serviceable, view it in any other light, and it will be wholly inefficient. Its value consists only in being trustworthy as far as it reaches; and guiding safely, though not guiding everywhere. I trust that I shall not often overlook any truly great and consummate picture; but it is better to lose sight of ten than to pass false judgment on one; and I strive so to look and so to write, that the repentances which must necessarily follow all hurried work may be of my silences only—not of my words.

NOTES

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

The Academy walls present us this year with much matter for curious speculation, or rather for careful and earnest forecasting of the probable course of our schools of art in this their transitional stage of effort. Accidentally, there are no leading pictures, and the rooms are filled with more or less successful works by the disciples of the Pre-Raphaelite school, which, as I stated five years ago it would [1], has entirely prevailed against all opposition; sweeping away in its strong current many of the opposers themselves, whirling them hither and thither, for the moment, in its eddies, without giving them time to strike out; and tearing down in its victory a few useful old landmarks, which we shall have to build up again by and bye. But the main question forced upon our thoughts this year is the result of the new modes of study on minds of average or inferior power. For what was done in the first instance by men of singular genius, under intense conditions of mental excitement, is now done, partly as a quiet duty, partly in compliance with the prevalent fashion, by men of ordinary powers in ordinary tempers—resulting, of course, not in brilliant, but only in worthy and satisfactory work; respecting which commonplace completeness there are several points of interest for our consideration. For a year or two considerable disappointment may be felt by the disciples of the new school. Conscious in themselves of an entire change

[1] *Edinburgh Lectures*, p. 231.

in their modes of thought, and a vigorous advance in powers both of sight and execution, they will be necessarily mortified to find that the advance is unrewarded by distinction; that their pictures, which before were unnoticed in the midst of others as wrong, are now unnoticed in the midst of others as right; and that they have become no more conspicuous in reformation than they were in heresy. There is, however, this comfort for them (without counting the comfort in the mere consciousness of being right, whether noticed or not), that the kind of painting which they now practise is capable of far more extended appeal to the popular mind. The old art of trick and tradition had no language but for the connoisseur; this natural art speaks to all men; around it daily the circles of sympathy will enlarge; pictures will become gradually as necessary to domestic life as books; they will be largely bought—though little wondered at; the painter will have to content himself with being as undistinguished as an author, and must be satisfied in this unpraised usefulness.

Secondly. The pictures of the rising school will in a few years be much more interesting than they are now. In learning to work carefully from nature, everybody has been obliged to paint what will stay to be painted; and the best of nature will not wait. Moreover, a subject which must be returned to every day for a couple of months must necessarily be near the house door; and artists cannot always have their lodgings where they choose; many of them, unable to quit their usual residences, must paint the best thing they can find in their neighbourhood; and this best accessible bit, however good as a study—(anything will do for that)—will usually be uninteresting to the public. The evil is increased by affectations of Wordsworthian simplicity; also by a good deal of genuine simplicity; and of more or less foolish sentiment. Formerly, when people were forced to draw by rule, and were

never allowed either to think or feel, we were at least untroubled by foolish thoughts and weak feelings; now, when the rage is for sentiment, and everybody is encouraged to tell us all that is in or near their hearts, we must not be surprised to find that naïveté may sometimes be tiresome as well as formalism; and the exaggeration of sensibility as offensive as the pedantry of science. The compensation is in this case greater than the evil: we are sure that whatever thoughts or passions truly possess the painter, will be truly expressed by him; while in old times they would have been silenced or constrained. The extent of these two adverse influences, however, is curiously shown in the present Academy. Because it is necessary to paint on successive days from the same object, in order to realize it to perfection, we have hardly a single interesting sky in the whole gallery;—Mr Dillon's sunset on the Nile (273), and Mr Cooke's at Venice (577) are almost the only pictures of merit which acknowledge the existence of clouds as a matter of serious interest; and because the humblest subjects are pathetic when Pre-Raphaelitically rendered, the two pieces most representative of the school in the rooms are both of stonebreakers: one (Mr Brett's), of a boy hard at work on his heap in the morning, and the other (Mr Wallis's), of an old man dead on his heap at night. Taking which facts in their full significance, it is pleasant to think what this new school of ours will do when it once gets fairly to work on materials worth its while. Here we have literally only experiments and early lessons: trials of strength on fragments of landscape in serene weather; quiet little millstreams and corners of meadows, slopes of sand hills, farmyard gates, blackberry hedges, and clumps of furze. But what shall we say when the power of painting, which makes even these so interesting, begins to exert itself, with the aid of imagination and memory, on the splendid transience of nature, and her noblest continuance; when we have the courses of

heaven's golden clouds instead of squares of blue through cottage casements; and the fair river mists, and mountain shrouds of vapour instead of cottage smoke; pine forests as well as banks of grass, and fallen precipices instead of heaps of flints. All this is yet to come; nay, even the best of the quiet, accessible, simple gifts of nature are yet to come. How strange that among all this painting of delicate detail, there is not a true one of English spring!—that no Pre-Raphaelite has painted a cherry-tree in blossom, dark-white against the twilight of April; nor an almond-tree rosy on the blue sky; nor the flush of the apple-blossom, nor a blackthorn hedge, nor a wild rose hedge; nor a bank with crown-circlets of the white nettle; nor a wood-ground of hyacinths [1]; no, nor even heather, and such things of which we talk continually. Nobody has ever painted heather yet, nor a rock spotted richly with mosses; nor gentians, nor Alpine roses, nor white oxalis in the woods, nor anemone nemorosa, nor even so much as the first springing leaves of any tree in their pale, dispersed delicate sharpness of shape. Everything has to be done yet; and we must not think quite so much of ourselves till we have done it, even though we have got to be so profoundly moral that we make everybody who looks at our work the wiser for it. We must take care not always to make them sadder also. Indeed, I look with deep respect and delight on the steady purpose of doing good, which has thus in a few years changed the spirit of our pictures, and turned most of them into a sort of sermons; only let it always be remembered that it is much easier to be didactic than to be lovely, and that it is some-

[1] That is to say, so as to bring out their beauty for a principal subject. Mr Inchbold painted some wood hyacinths and gentians, but too few, and half hidden in a litter of other flowers. Mr Oakes painted a beautiful lichened rock, but obscured with furze and rubbish—not brought out in its power.

times desirable to excite the joy of the spectator as well as his indignation.

What, however, I have to say this year of particular pictures will cast itself, to my regret, a little into the form of carping; for now that nearly all are careful and well-intended, there is no possibility of praising the universal care, or describing the universal intention: while, on the other hand, there are no leading pictures of the class that silence fault-finding; but several which just miss of being leading pictures, owing to faults which it therefore becomes a duty to find. I hope it will be understood that in my statement of these blemishes, I do not in general fix upon them because the picture in question has more faults than others, but because its merits make them more to be regretted.

18. Old Holland. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

Certainly there is no cause for regret here; Mr Stanfield never painted a more delightful picture, or one showing more of his peculiar power. The fish are unusually beautiful both in line and colour.

29. The Bluidy Tryste. (J. N. Paton.)

I regret the prevailing gloom which at present characterizes this artist's work; art may face horror, but should not dwell with it. The greatest painters habitually have chosen cheerful, or serene subjects; and if Mr Paton will paint them more frequently, he would feel the real power of a frightful one more, when there is need for him to paint it. There was, I believe, such need in the case of his other picture 'In Memoriam', it having been designed at the time of the fit of miserable public weakness which had like to have checked the doing of judgment and justice on the Indian murderers; but there was no need, as far I as I can see, or feel, for the defilement of this sweet dell with guilt; at least, unless it had been done more

solemnly. The dead body is far too well dressed; no one can be sorry that there is an end of the coxcomb; he might have been far more gallantly dressed for his tryst without being so fine. Then Nature ought to have had more observance of him—the sun ought to have fallen here and there upon his face—yes, and upon his blood; and the hue of the leafage round him should have had, it seems to me, the deep sympathy through all its innocent life which is felt in those words of Keats:

> Saying, moreover, Isabel, my sweet,
> Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
> And a large flint stone weighs upon my feet
> Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
> Their leaves and prickly nuts: a sheepfold bleat
> Comes from beyond the river to my bed.

Many readers thought it a mere piece of flippancy when I said, respecting Mr Paton's beautiful picture of the 'Home', that he ought to paint nothing for some time to come but apricots and peaches. It was, on the contrary, a quiet statement of a true necessity. Mr Paton will not learn what is wanting to his mode of painting until he practises colour from simple objects, in the realization of which emotion can have no share. This foreground is, of course, painted with intensest care, and perfect draughtsmanship; there is more natural history in it than in most others in the rooms: the little pinguicula alpina on the left, the oxalis leaves in the middle, the red ferns, and small red viper on the right, are all exquisitely articulated as far as form goes; but they are painted without enough mystery or change of colour. It will be necessary for this painter to make colour his main object for some months, and to paint the leaves thoroughly well on a large scale before he reduces them to foreground magnitude; but the way he has executed the girdles of the two figures, the piece of bank above the knight's head, and

that just under his breast, between it and the bugle, proves him to be capable of all perfection.

59. Fairy Tales. (W. C. T. Dobson.)

It would be difficult to improve the sweet earnestness of the little face; or the conception of the whole attitude. I merely pay tribute of admiration in passing, having had my say about Mr Dobson's colour before. His larger picture, 446, is very interesting in the new conception of Ishmael; the boy, against whom was to be the hand of all men, kissing his father's hand, and receiving his blessing. What a difference between this and the vile Guercino of Milan, in which Abraham scolds them out of the tent—Hagar crying because she has no chance of another 'place'.

But Mr Dobson is, I think, wrong in his idea of Sarah. She may, indeed, for all that is recorded of her, have been a hard and commonplace woman: but there was nothing in her sending away Hagar at this time to prove that she was, and it would have been nobler to have conceived her as more sorrowful, and hesitating in her cruelty.

79. Athaliah's Dismay, etc. (S. A. Hart, R.A.)

I fear I must leave this, and its correspondent picture of the 'high art' school, Mr Poole's Lear (310), to the admiration of *The Athenæum*, which, with great felicity of expression, declares the Lear to be under a 'gloating, delicious light', and the Athaliah to be 'of the highest order of Jezebel beauty'. Jezebel's beauty, however, needed some painting before she tried its effect when her life hung upon it, and I fear that Athaliah's beauty must have stood in need of some such help at this period of her age. Has Mr Hart actually painted this large picture without inquiring how old the queen or her grandson were? or does he seriously mean the figure of Joash to represent a boy only seven years old; and that of the Queen to

represent a wicked Eastern woman of seven or eight and forty—for Athaliah could not be less—her son was three and twenty when the arrows of Jehu overtook him by Ibleam, seven years before. But *The Athenæum* is too severe upon Mr Hart, in its observation that 'the dull vacant face of Joab is rather a blot'; for, as Joab at this time had been dead just a hundred and forty-two years, it was likely his face would be vacant.

101. A Kibab Shop, Scutari. (J. F. Lewis.)

My first impression is that this very notable picture shows the labour in it too clearly, but I cannot judge of it in haste. The animal life is nearly perfect; the kid making up its mind to butt the pigeons is especially delightful. 122, however, is a more consummate example of the painter's work; and 245, though at first it looks uninteresting, will be found very wonderful on quiet examination. His gift of grace in arrangement of line is best seen in the fall of the red drapery of No. 51. But I hardly know what is the matter with me this year, for I find Mr Paton's pictures too dramatic, and Mr Lewis's not dramatic enough. He has thirty-one figures in all, upon the walls, and all the drama to be got out of the whole number is the arrangement of a nosegay and the presentation of a cup of coffee. Perhaps those who delight in the gloomier pictures of the present exhibition may be able to excite themselves into some interest in this last event, by supposing the coffee to be poisoned.

There is, however, one point which ought specially to be noted respecting Lewis's work—it is always and wholly original. When, some time ago, I claimed him as a Pre-Raphaelite, I never meant that he had been influenced in his practice by any of the other members of that school; but that he was associated with it, as ten years ago I showed that Turner was, and as all true painters for ever must be, by the mere fact of their

painting truth instead of formalism or idealism ; while Lewis is still more closely connected with the present nominal masters of the school by his completeness of finish to the utmost corners of his canvas. But he was not led to this finishing by Hunt or Rosetti. There never, perhaps, in the history of art was work so wholly independent as Lewis's. He worked with the sternest precision twenty years ago, when Pre-Raphaelitism had never been heard of ; pursued calmly the same principles, developed by himself, for himself, in the midst of all adverse influences in Rome, and through years of lonely labour in Syria. In all those years of Eastern light, he wrought with Nature only for his master : he cannot have seen so much as one good picture from the time of his leaving Rome until his return to England. And all our discoveries here, and all our talking and quarrelling about them, have been nothing to John Lewis—as they were nothing to Turner. There is not another picture in all this Academy which I believe to have been painted wholly without reference to the Pre-Raphaelite dogmas. They are either directly or distantly imitative ; either cautiously recusant or vigorously defiant ; but John Lewis paints as he would have painted had no such school, no such dogmas, ever existed ; and that girl would still have been there, and she would still have had the same exquisite glow in her face—the same delicate light in her eyes—and the same finished tracery of gold on her robe—though Pre-Raphaelitism had been strangled ten years ago in its birth, and all the painters in Europe had now been daubing like Haydon or Benjamin West.

119. Sunday Evening. (T. Webster, R.A.)

Mr Webster is quite delightful both in this picture and 334. I never remember seeing the expression of a child at once full of affection and mischief, so delicately and perfectly touched as in this little disturber ; one sees so well that the house never can be quiet for her,

except when she is asleep; and holds no other joy so dear as that disquiet.

200. The Maid of Derwent. (H. H. Emerson.)

A promising average example of the kind of study from nature which fills the rooms, and of which it is impossible to mark the other instances specially. This is better balanced in effect than most, and looks as if good work would come of it.

204. The Missing Boat. (Frank Stone.)

Very good in much of its expression, and thoroughly careful, but too much elaborated in the studio, and not quite enough on the beach. It is got up too primly, as the principal figure is in her fishwife's dress. Sorrow and salt water, after six hours' stand on the shingle, don't leave a woman's dress quite so tidy.

218. The Derby Day. (W. P. Frith, R.A.)

I am not sure how much power is involved in the production of such a picture as this; great ability there is assuredly—long and careful study—considerable humour—untiring industry,—all of them qualities entitled to high praise, which I doubt not they will receive from the delighted public. It is also quite proper and desirable that this English carnival should be painted: and of the entirely popular manner of painting, which, however, we must remember, is necessarily, because popular, stooping and restricted, I have never seen an abler example. The drawing of the distant figures seems to me especially dexterous and admirable; but it is very difficult to characterize the picture in accurate general terms. It is a kind of cross between John Leech and Wilkie, with a dash of daguerreotype here and there, and some pretty season ing with Dickens' sentiment.

216. At a Farmhouse in Surrey. (G. P. Boyce.)

Full of truth and sweet feeling. How pleasant it is, after looking long at Mr Frith's picture, to see how happy a little girl may be who hasn't gone to the Derby.

273. Emigrants on the Nile. (F. Dillon.)

Pelicans to wit; and many thanks to Mr Dillon for giving us some idea of the wonderful aspect of the bird in flight: we must certainly have it carved so in a cusp or gargoyle in the Oxford Museum. The transitions of glowing colour, from the nearer ground to the sunlit horizon, are far finer than anything Mr Dillon has yet accomplished: the drawing of the palm-trees seems admirable.

284. The Nativity. (A. Hughes.)

Quite beautiful in thought; and indicative of greater colourist's power than anything in the rooms; there is no other picture so right in manner of work, the utmost possible value being given to every atom of tint laid on the canvas. I happen to know that it was hastily finished, in an after-thought—and I am sorry to see that the painter has been fatigued to the point of not seeing how far he had failed in some parts of his purpose. He had another picture perfectly finished—and, though a little grotesque in fancy, exquisitely beautiful; 'the King's Garden'—why has he not sent that? [1]

[1] The absence of the other Pre-Raphaelite leaders from their posts is highly to be reprobated: they have no business to set themselves to work which they can't finish in proper time. Every year, at this season, the moment they have seen the effect of their pictures on the public, every one of them should go into the country; and before the long days are half over, each of them should have painted one picture of moderate size for next year: let them lock that up, and resolve not to look at it again till they see it on the Academy walls. Then set themselves to whatever perennial labour they choose to undertake, resting from it always about Easter, so as to be quite fresh to begin their regular Academy work again in May.

It is quite possible that, in this nativity, thoughtless people may be offended by an angel's being set to hold a stable lantern. Everybody is ready to repeat pretty verses from Spenser about angels who 'watch and truly ward', without ever asking themselves what they look out for—or what they ward off: everybody is also ready to talk about ministering spirits, so long as it is not asked what ministry means. Perhaps they might even reach to a distinct idea of such practical ministries on the part of angels as warding off a bullet from their son in India—or leading him to a spring when he was thirsty. But they cannot conceive that highest of all dignity in the entirely angelic ministration, which would simply do rightly whatever needed to be done—great or small—and steady a stable lantern if it swung uneasily, just as willingly as drive back a thunder cloud, or helm a ship with a thousand souls in it from a lee shore.

300. Weary Life. (R. Carrick.)

A notable picture; very great in many respects, but with grievous faults. The two principal figures are quite right—more especially the child; nothing can be more beautiful than the way it lies; nothing much better than the painting of it; and the thought of the whole singularly pathetic. But that thought is only half developed. I am amazed that a painter of Mr Carrick's sincerity should allow himself in the conventionalisms of this design. What light is this that is cast on the two sleeping figures—morning?—evening?—noon? All suppositions are alike negatived by those trees in the background, which are in the deepest twilight; the rick under which the figures rest is also in darkness; and thus, for a mere effect of stage illumination on his foreground, the painter has lost all the pathos which there would have been in the calm of long, low sunshine on the solemn fields; or in the dew of the morning upon their peace—after

the theatre's fantastic nocturns. The whole value of the background, as a space for informing incident, is also lost. No story is told by the dull trees. I will not take away Mr Carrick's freedom and pleasure in invention by offering any suggestion as to the incidents that might occupy that background; but assuredly it ought not to be empty. Besides all this, the wonder of the peasant woman is vulgarly told—her gesture at this moment is highly improbable. She could not have approached so near the figures without seeing them before; unless we suppose her to have walked backwards, which indeed she might have done in raking: but the gesture has an unnatural and theatrical look for all that; and her face is utterly without expression. When there are only three figures in a picture, we must not make a nonentity of the nearest.

And lastly, the painting is throughout too hard; the straw especially is far too much defined. Has Mr Carrick never looked carefully at the straw in the first picture which showed the beauty of it—the 'Dove returning to the Ark'—in which not a single stem was entirely defined, and yet all was real. It needs to be constantly kept in mind by all painters, that good painting must be reserved as well as expressive—it withholds always as much as it reveals. All mystery, or all clearness, is equally wrong, though clearness is the noblest error. Nature is simple, and therefore intelligible; but she is also infinite, and therefore mysterious. Whenever you can make a bit of painting quite out, that bit of it is wrong. There is no exception to this rule.

The picture is, however, so beautiful, in spite of all these defects, that it becomes almost the duty of the painter to perfect it.

326. A Pastoral. (J. C. Hook, A.)

Exquisite in idea, and some qualities of colour, as Mr Hook's pictures are always; but by no means better

than what he did last year, and if not better, then necessarily a little worse. Pause is, I believe, not possible in art. It is a pity thoughts so beautiful should not be entirely realized: this is, at best, but a full and suggestive sketch. It is not the way to paint a dog, nor a woman's arm, nor a sky.

453 is again entirely right and beautiful in conception, but imperfect in touch. There is a peculiar truth in the way he has given the deep tone of the colour of the sea, out of which the surf opens upon the rocks, like a great light, the snowy glare and roar coming at the same instant.

350. Flower Girls—Town and Country. (J. C. Horsley, A.)

The boldest effort we have yet seen from Mr Horsley's hand, and I think a very telling one. It is another example of the moralizing tendency of the art of the day; but if Mr Horsley makes his ladies going to masquerades look so charming in their gay dresses, I fear they will continue to wear them, in spite of poor flower-girls leaning against the gate pillars, or innocent examples of life in the country.

372. (A. L. Egg.)

As I see that several mistakes have been made in the interpretation of this impressive picture in the public prints, I give the true reading of it, though I should have thought it was clearly enough legible. In the central piece the husband discovers his wife's infidelity: he dies five years afterwards. The two lateral pictures represent the same moment of night a fortnight after his death. The same little cloud is under the moon. The two children see it from the chamber in which they are praying for their lost mother, and their mother, from behind a boat under a vault on the river-shore. The painting, as such, is not first-rate; but

the purpose of the picture is well reached, and the moonlight is true and beautiful.

428. Past and Present. (Miss A. Blunden.)

There is not a more painstaking nor sincere piece of work than this in the room; though it is clearly the the work of a hand which has not yet gained its full strength. The figures are far from satisfactory: but there are pieces of the old manor house and foreground thoroughly felt, and very nearly got right—much righter in general tone of colour than is usual in early work so far carried. The picture is very curious in its quantity of work, and well worth a long stoop to it.

442. The Gaoler's Daughter. (P. H. Calderon.)

The figure of the imprisoned priest is perfectly right and beautiful: the girl, nearly so, but the child ought to be repainted; it spoils a very touching picture. Mr Calderon had a promising little interior picture in the British Institution.

455. The Ducal Palace, Venice. (D. Roberts, R.A.)

As this seems to be a definite and energetic protest by Mr Roberts against Turner's idea of Venetian colour, and against all that I have endeavoured to urge, or describe in support of that conception, I can only accept it as such, and pass it by: but I may at least say that protests against gondoliers' management of their boats are not likely to be effective. No gondolier can by any possibility get into any one of the positions here supposed, more especially that of the figure on the left. A gondola is rowed from a little elevated deck, with a raised slope for the hindmost foot, close at its stern, not near the felze (canopy), and at his fullest thrust forward the rower's position is well over the boat's side on his left hand; so that if he missed his strike, he would go head foremost into the water on that side, without even touching the felze:

the certainty of which result renders a tyro's first efforts with the stern oar exceedingly interesting—as well as the no less precise certainty that if he catches a crab, (and fish of this species may be easily secured on a windy day), he must go instantly into the water over the stern.

499. Reynard's Glove. (Miss A. F. Mutrie.)

Very pretty, indeed, Miss Mutrie, as usual; but you know those are perfect dwarfs of foxgloves. Bud, bell, and seed, I counted 148 on one stem last summer (under the last crag of the Ochils, that looks to Stirling), and an average foxglove that has at all enjoyed its life, will always have seventy or eighty. One energetic fellow I saw near Inverness, who had not indeed enjoyed his life, but had grandly made the best of it; he had been broken down in his youth—his head laid down hill, past all rising again; but he had lost no courage, thrown out three upright shoots from the side of his stem, and become three foxgloves instead of one.

500. Daughters of the Alhambra. (J. Phillips.)

All Mr Phillips's work is able, and, to a certain extent, right; but I think he has never again done anything so good as his picture of the church-door two years ago. He is losing refinement; while his Spanish ladies—and still more his Spanish lovers—seem to me all somewhat more Phillippian than Castilian. This picture is, however, a good example—rich, and pleasantly composed.

526. The Warren. (J. W. Oakes.)

Exquisitely painted in the flowery centre; but of all foregrounds, one of sand and bent grass least pays labour: and why does Mr Oakes concentrate his strength on foregrounds only? He had a beautiful barley field in the British Institution—with butterflies on it, and some nice furze and thistles besides;

but a great deal more of them than was wanted; while the distance was wholly crude and unsatisfactory.

528. Peaceful Days. (P. R. Morris.)

Very beautiful, and easier in mode of laying colour than most of the work of the year.

557. Sunset on the Lagune. (E. W. Cooke, R.A.)

I can answer for the truth of this study, representing one of the calm sea-glories of Venice, which painters are too apt to despise, though poets never. Both Shelley and Byron seem to have loved these Euganean Hills and the sunsets behind them, more than Venice herself.

562. 'Thou wert our Conscript'. (H. Wallis.)

On the whole, to my mind, the picture of the year; and but narrowly missing being a first-rate of any year. It is entirely pathetic and beautiful in purpose and colour; its only fault being a somewhat too heavy laying of the body of paint, more especially in the distant sky, which has no joy nor clearness when it is looked close into, and in the blue of the hills that rise against it, which is also too uniform and dead. All perfect painting is light painting—light at some point of the touch at all events; no half inch of a good picture but tells, when it is looked at, 'None but my master could have laid me so.'

The ivy, ferns, etc., seem to me somewhat hastily painted, but they are lovely in colour, and may pass blameless, as I think it would have been in false taste to elaborate this subject further. The death quietness given by the action of the startled weasel is very striking.

854. The Rivals, from Clynnog Beach. (C. F. Williams.)

The magnificent sketch by Landseer in this room,

showing, as it does, all his wonderful handling on the boldest scale, must withdraw all eyes at first from the lower walls. But when due honour has been done to the deer, this careful and unpretending study deserves a minute's stooping to it, admirable as it is alike in rendering of extent of wet sand, weedy shingle, and breaking wave; and then it would be well to cross to 609 (H. Anelay), which, though not an altogether successful effort, is a most earnest one to render the mingling of transparency with reflection in pure and perfect sea. Who ever dreamed of painting sea like this till now? and yet that is simply the normal state of sea. What we have been in the habit, taught by the Dutch, of calling sea-pieces, ought to be called merely mud-bottom pieces.

1089. Stone Breaker. (J. Brett.)

This, after John Lewis's, is simply the most perfect piece of painting, with respect to touch, in the Academy this year; in some points of precision it goes beyond anything the Pre-Raphaelites have done yet. I know no such thistledown, no such chalk hills, and elm trees, no such natural pieces of far away cloud in any of their works.

The composition is palpably crude and wrong in many ways, especially in the awkward white cloud at the top; and the tone of the whole a little too much as if some of the chalk of the flints had been mixed with all the colours. For all that, it is a marvellous picture, and may be examined inch by inch with delight; though nearly the last stone I should ever have thought of any one's sitting down to paint, would have been a chalk flint. If he can make so much of that, what will Mr Brett not make of mica slate and gneiss! If he can paint so lovely a distance from the Surrey downs and railway-traversed vales, what would he not make of the chestnut groves of the Val d'Aosta! I heartily wish him good speed and long exile.

FRENCH EXHIBITION

Generally, this exhibition is full of interest; and instructive to our English painters in the evidence of steady training shown in its work. It is dominant in scenes of domestic life; deficient in landscape.

7. The Plough. (Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur.)

This lady gains in power every year, but there is one stern fact concerning art which she will do well to consider, if she means her power to reach full development. No painter of animals ever yet was entirely great, who shrank from painting the human face; and Mdlle. Bonheur clearly *does* shrink from it. Of course, a ploughman ploughing westward at evening slouches his hat and stoops his head; but the back of him, in this action, with a foreshortened yoke of oxen, and three of the awkwardest haystacks in France, do not altogether constitute a subject for a picture. In the Horse-Fair, the human faces were nearly all dexterously but disagreeably, hidden, and the one chiefly shown had not the slightest character. Mdlle. Bonheur may rely upon this, that if she cannot paint a man's face, she can neither paint a horse's, a dog's, nor a bull's. There is in every animal's eye a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature, if not of the soul. I assure Mdlle. Bonheur, strange as the words may sound to her, after what she has been told by huntsmen and racers, she has never painted a horse yet. She has only painted trotting bodies of horses.

62. The Gleaner Boy. (Edward Frère.)

The expressions of admiration for this painter's work which I used last year, were thought by many readers to have been written in a fit of momentary and uncalculating enthusiasm. I repeat therefore—after a year's deliberation—with such plain and purposed meaning as I always try to give words which I know will seem questionable, that this painter unites 'the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico.'

That is to say, first, he approaches the simplest subject with perfect feeling of its great humanity, conscious of all the most solemn pathos which there is in the crowned sorrows of poverty, and calm submissions of toil: interpreting to the full, and for the first time in the history of sacred paintings, the great words of the first Beatitude. For the poverty which was honoured by the great painters and thinkers of the middle ages was an ostentatious, almost a presumptuous poverty; if not this, at least it was chosen and accepted—the poverty of men who had given their goods to feed the simpler poor, and who claimed in honour what they had lost in luxury; or, at the best, in claiming nothing for themselves, had still a proud understanding of their own self-denial, and a confident hope of future reward. But it has been reserved for this age to perceive and tell the blessedness of another kind of poverty than this; not voluntary nor proud, but accepted and submissive; not clear-sighted nor triumphant, but subdued and patient: partly patient in tenderness—of God's will; partly patient in blindness—of man's oppression; too laborious to be thoughtful—too innocent to be conscious—too long experienced in sorrow to be hopeful—waiting in its peaceful darkness for the unconceived dawn; yet not without its own sweet, complete, untainted happiness, like intermittent notes of birds before the daybreak,

or the first gleams of heaven's amber on the eastern grey. Such poverty as this it has been reserved for this age of ours to honour while it afflicted; it is reserved for the age to come, to honour it—and to spare.

I said, secondly, that this painter had 'the grace of Reynolds': that is to say, grace consummate, no painter having ever before approached Reynolds in the rendering of the momentary loveliness and trembling life of childhood, by beauty of play and change in every colour and curve; the great Venetians were too great to do it; their lines were always grave and severe in their grace; and all other men but Reynolds have been too mean to do it, until this one. And, lastly, I say he has the holiness of Angelico: that is to say, perfect purity from all sensual taint, from all baseness of associated ideas, there never passing over his brow so much as the shadow of an Evil Spirit's wings. This I say of him, and also that the man of whom this may truly be said is, if he uses his power faithfully, simply and briefly one of the chief men of this century. But on his faithfulness to the gift of his deep heart all now rests: and he is at present failing in this faithfulness. I noticed last year that there were certain characters in his painting which, in any other man's work, would have been faults, and which were only to be forgiven in him so far as they were unavoidable in getting his main result. Now this year the main result is not better—is not even quite so good, and the faults are more conspicuous, proving themselves therefore faults positive. The colour even of the faces is less pure; that of the background is becoming dark and heavy; it is difficult to see even as much as the painter intends us to see: we feel as if there were a coating of clay over the work which wants to be washed off. This manner of painting will assuredly gain upon him, unless he sets a standard to himself far beyond it; and I believe he will have to paint some pieces of still life, in which no

question of feeling or of harmony of expression will interfere with his efforts, up to the highest point of finish possible to him, for exercise merely: afterwards receding from the precision and brilliancy he does not want when he uses such passages in his pictures. Take, for instance, the piece of near grass in this 'Gleaner'; it, of course, in nowise resembles grass: not a leaf of it is true, nor is it lovely; it is merely an indication of the thing meant, in a tone harmonious with the rest of the work. Now the painter ought not only to see more in the grass than this, but ought to be able to paint more, without hurting his general effect [1]. So, also, in the corn which the boy carries, there is none of the beauty or complexity of a real cluster of wheat; and if the artist would draw the real sheaf perfectly, he would be able to make the number of touches he has permitted himself here quite as subordinate, but far more lovely. The sadness of colour which he chooses is indeed a part, and a very important part, of the pathos of his subjects—

[1] The reader may perhaps be surprised at my speaking here somewhat in the tone of one of the men of the old 'generalization' school: about subduing parts for the effect of the whole. But this is because I do not consider Frère's as finished pictures, but as sketches of expression. In a finished picture, all must be finished; and in a sketch, all must be sketched, up to an harmonious point—nothing beyond that point. Frère's faces are not finished; he seems to pause just when he has touched the truth of expression, lest he should lose it by doing more. Then, of course, the accessories must not be finished in a higher degree; he must be content with the expression only of those—as with the expression only of the human face. The rule I gave for finished pictures is a perfectly true one—namely, that if you paint faces ill, you must not try to mend them by painting backgrounds worse: but it is also a true rule, that if you sketch a figure lightly, you must not finish the burden it carries heavily, nor give a completion to the lesser thing which you have refused to the greater. The picture, No. 63, is, however, very nearly up to his mark of last year. The hair of the child is beautifully touched.

but he must take care not to allow melancholy to sink into ennui, nor humility to degenerate into dullness.

I take no separate note of the other pictures by him in this room; for I believe the persons who can feel them at all will feel them without being much talked to about them: only it should be observed generally that the greatness of Frère consists in such slight things that it is only by long looking at his work that it can be felt: the difference between him and all other painters of similar subjects is quite infinite—and yet it depends literally on hairsbreadths, and less than hairsbreadths; on the ineffable subtlety of line which makes gesture or expression precisely *right*. Examine, for instance, the way the child leans on her sister, pushing a little to get at the shells in her lap, in No. 59, and consider how it is that all the child's mind is given in its attitude—all its fitful, troublesome, innocent, inconsequent eagerness, just in the turn of a sleeve!

103. Sea Shore at Blankenburg—Afternoon. (Henri Le Hon.)

Very clever in the balanced depressions of tone which bring out the gleams of light on boat and sea, and showing, I think, great feeling and skill in the painter; but this depression of tone is, nevertheless, a standing mistake of the French school. The French painters always chill the colours of nature as they lower them, by toning everything with grey: and thus not only alter the depth and pitch of the colour, but the colour itself. They do not merely change its key, but debase its nature, that is to say, if they have trees to lower, they turn what is in reality pale *pure* green into dark *dirty* green, when they ought to change it only into a darker green of the same purity; and if they have pale yellow sand to lower, instead of lowering it to a dark yellow, equally glowing, they lower it to a dark grey, and thus turn sand into slime. It is very curious, that in spite of all the talk about

Titian, this simple principle of his colouring, has never been understood. When Titian lowers tones, he always lowers them without changing the colours. Pale blue he translates into ultramarine: pale rose-colour into crimson: pale sand-colour into deep brown: and pale green into emerald green; but he never pollutes the blue sky with blackness, nor stains pale roses with clay; whereas, nearly all the French landscapes in this room represent nature seen through a smoked glass. If the sky had only been half as livid at the last eclipse of the sun as the French landscapists represent it on sunny afternoons, the birds would have gone to roost in a much more satisfactory way than I hear they did.

108. The Study. (Louis Ernest Meissonier.)

I look upon this work and its companion (109) with exceeding sorrow, for they show great powers wasted in producing results either useless, or worse than useless in so far as they encourage the disposition of the modern patron—so long fatal to the best interests and highest purposes of art—to spend his wealth in petty luxuries of the drawing-room, instead of in the bold and large art which is visible to all men, and helpful to all men. I have never in anywise joined in the vague cry raised usually by ambitious and weak painters, for public encouragement to 'high art', or 'historical art'—as if art might not be both high and historical on a small scale as well as a large one. But, on the other hand, I have always protested, in the strongest way I could, against the miserable degradation of pictures, by the influence of the Dutch schools, into toys for boudoirs, or marvels for cabinets. And here is the old Dutch principle again in all its strength. Narrow, easily imitated, easily appreciated chiaroscuro, let in by a single window, to get dioramic relief —brown shadows—bright touches—dull surfaces—coppery colours: all Flanders and Holland over again.

Quite as good as ever Holland did; nay, it seems to me, in some respects, better; but assuredly quite as wretched, as forgetful of the high purposes of painting and as traitorous to the royalty of human nature.

130. The Music Lesson. (Emile Plassan.)

Exquisite in touch of pencil, and in appreciation of delicate character, both in features and gesture.

It is lighter and softer in laying of colour than Frère's work, and more refined in colour than Meissonier's; on the whole it seems to me the best piece of quiet painting in the room. The French painters far surpass us in their understanding of the light expressions and trivial actions of daily life; partly because they aim at them more simply, and are content to be true and polished, while our painters are always striving to be heroic, moral, or amusing; but also, I suppose, from an innate tact and sympathy which we never have possessed—nor can possess.

139. Marguerite at the Fountain. (Ary Scheffer.)

As this picture is designed on the assumption that the universe generally is vulgar, and that the noblest ideal of colour is to be found in dust, it of course puts itself beyond criticism. But it suggests a curious question. It may be—I believe it is—a just view of the depth and purity of Marguerite's character, which assumes that the first whispers of her companions would not flush her face, but turn it pale. But, supposing the painter should ever wish to paint a woman 'glowing all over noble shame', how will he reconcile the human crimson with the dusty insensibilities of his background?

84. Borromean Islands on the Lago Maggiore (?) (J. B. Pyne.)

I am sincerely glad to see that Mr Pyne has succeeded in reaching better qualities of colour than in his earlier pictures. I had feared the range of his work had been limited by natural incapacity for the perception of hue; but he begins to disprove such incapacity, and it seems to me quite at his own choice whether he will now become a real artist, or remain merely a popular draughtsman and supplier of the market with 'lake scenery'. It is at his own choice, I repeat,—but only at his resolute choice; for he has much to surrender of his own, and much to learn from the external world. His own part in the conception of this No. 84, for instance—is somewhat too manifest —and highly curious. The picture appears to represent an inlet of green water among desolate rocks, somewhere near the North Pole; the faint, pure, frosty, Arctic light penetrating into their jagged hollows; a shore of grey slime, washed down from the glaciers, stretches into the shallow water of the inlet, on which tongue of land (at the right hand of the spectator) Mr Pyne has erected a small model of an Italian campanile and some clay houses. On the slope of the hill above he has carried his bitterness of mockery of any lost navigator, to the extent of setting up some pillars as they usually stand in the alleys of vineyards, and arranging some copper foliage upon them, having a resemblance to vine leaves, distant indeed, but yet clear enough to be very painful to persons suffering from cold and

hunger. It is true there is some Iceland moss in the foreground (is it not slightly too brown for that lichen ?); and his malice towards his fellow-men is tempered by some kindness for animals ; since by raising an island, traversed by alternate terraces and slopes, in the middle of the lagoon, he has provided for the exercise and amusement of the white bears, who, it is well known, are fond of sliding down small slopes of this kind on their hindquarters.

If Mr Pyne is determined to paint these Arctic desolations, he would find that their real incidents were in the end more interesting, though less startling, than these grotesque introductions of Surrey-garden decoration ; but I do not see why he should confine himself to Northern subjects. Among the Italian lakes, to one of which this very Polar scene bears (except in the forms of the mountains) so singular a resemblance as to have caused, I presume, the mistake in the catalogue, he would find materials, which though at first much more difficult to treat, would, in the end, reward his labour with a richer charm ; shores dark with ilex and soft with olive, are surely pleasanter than slimy shallows ; and the Alps of the Simplon, soaring through their twelve thousand feet of air, purple with everlasting pines, are better worth painting than these little crags jutting out of the pools of the glacial sea, and hardly high enough to catch a few of the level rays of the revolving sun upon their lichenless edges.

Seriously and heartily, I am sorry for Mr Pyne, his work has now become well worth sorrow ; I never knew before that he cared for rosy lights and blue shadows, or could feel that there were other forms in the world than those of Mendip limestones. But I see here that he can ; and that he is only shutting himself wilfully away from the beauty that he might delight in. All these scenes of fairy land, which he supposes can only be got by fallacy, exist in truth—

exist in tenderness and loveliness, greater than he has any dream of, greater than he could at present conceive possible. But between them and him lies a fiery trial. His work, clever though it be, is at present wrong to the very core; so fatally has he blinded himself to the great facts of the earth. If he could bear to have this false work and the false principles involved in it fairly burnt away—burnt to their foundations, and after humiliation in their ashes, will paint steadily for six months from things quiet in colour and commonplace (as he will at first suppose) in form —solemnly resolving to allow himself neither a fallacy nor an avoidable incompletion; and having done this penance, will then seek again some of his favourite scenes, he will find a new world opened to him, from which he will never desire to wander more.

115. Mozart's Last Chorus.

Not a good picture; but very touching in its subject, and I think successful (is it not? for musicians must be judges in this) in the principal figure.

188. The Windings of the Wye. (H. J. Boddington.)

I am puzzled by the pictures of this class which the society produces so abundantly. There are this year about fifty in the room of nearly equal average value; some are a little richer in blue than others—some a little warmer in brown; a few, Mr Syer's chiefly (201, for instance), are more dexterous and light in touch than the rest; and one or two, like this 188, more ambitious in size and subject, but they may all be classed together as imperfect studies from pleasant mountain scenery, dependent for effect chiefly on redundance of rock forms and opposition of warm light to purple shade, with occasionally considerable tenderness of atmosphere—well studied reflections

in water, and sharply touched sticks and stones in the foreground. Nevertheless, I do not look upon them as done by recipe. There is evidence in all of them that the painters have worked much out of doors, and have faced midges and wet weather many a long day before they could either get into those dexterous habits of rock-drawing, or give definite portraiture of all the rock basins in a torrent bed—as Mr Pettitt has done in 139. Moreover, I really think they love the hills: those elaborate pieces of mountain flank, touched with amber, look to me as if they were painted quite for love—not to speak of many pretty stones and cottages, and streams with foam on them, and even bubbles—yes, and for the first time, as far as I recollect, bubbles with colour (699). But there is one fatal wrong in all of them, which is simply that nothing is *quite* right. The whole is respectable; but no single stone, no wreath of cloud, no cottage gable, is absolutely, decisively, insuperably good.

They are wrong, also, by having always too much of the same kind of thing. Too much bank—all alike, too many rocks—all alike; each piece of the picture undoes another, and nobody ever feels inclined to ask for more.

Then, farther, there are no strange things in them. Nature always looks strange when she is truly rendered, and is always doing what none of us expect from her. These painters never seem to get any out-of-the-way glimpses, or to catch one of the humours of the clouds in a wayward day. There was a little green bit of sunshine on the wet grass in the British Institution (234, C. Leslie), which had far more sight in it than any of these large pictures, though sharing with them the last fault I have to name—overloading and too smooth laying of colour. Half as much paint would have produced a result twice as good. Titian would put glow into a whole head with no more paint than goes to one of the touches on these foregrounds.

252. A fisherman's Daughter of Mola di Gæta. (F. Y. Hurlstone.)

Is it too late for Mr Hurlstone to recover himself? He might have been a noble painter. Bad and coarse as it is, that bright fish is the best piece of mere painting in all the rooms; and I believe, if Mr Hurlstone would set himself fairly to take account of his own work, he might yet feel how fast he is sinking. If he would but look some morning for half an hour steadily and closely at that piece of Thames slime, stained with dim gouts and blotches of vermilion, which he has given in the place of a left hand to the fisherman's daughter: and then walk straight into the National Gallery, and look for another half-hour at the drooped left hand of the princess—holding her crown—in Veronese's picture, I do believe he might yet be seized with desire to recover his ground;—and this desire, in him, would be capacity.

454. The Wife's Remonstrance. (J. Campbell.)

By far the best picture in the Suffolk-street Rooms this year: full of pathos, and true painting. But I fear Mr Campbell is unredeemably under the fatal influence which shortens the power of so many of the Pre-Raphaelites—the fate of loving ugly things better than beautiful ones. In his 'Visit to the Old Sailor' (800), he has painted the rugged face well; but quite spoiled the child's. He ought to repaint the child's face: the rest of the drawing is worth any pains he could spend on it.

783. Roast Chestnut Seller. (F. Smallfield.)

An interesting and successful study, as are also several other drawings by this artist in this room. But he seems to me to be imitating William Hunt's execution, without thoroughly understanding the motive of it. If he does not see things rough, he should

not paint them so: in No. 716 the blue sleeve looks like worsted work, not like painting. He has, however, two excellent studies in the Royal Academy (33, 877.)

NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

18. The Bass Rock. (J. W. Whymper.)

A most interesting subject, truly seen, and well rendered up to a certain point. There is no high power of present execution shown in it; but I think the painter must have great feeling, and perhaps even the rare gift of invention. Those bird-clouds are well wreathed and tossed, so as to show the noble form of the rock. I hope this painter may advance far.

63. Bardj. Açouss. (Charles Vacher.)

There is great beauty of tone in many of Mr Vacher's drawings, and their impression is often most pleasing: but he should really leave out the figures for some time to come, exercising himself in figure-drawing in the meanwhile; and also he needs to study individual pieces of foreground with more respect for their local colours. He is working too much by recipe, and the nearer stones are here very meagre.

111. The Rising of the Ground Sea. (S. Cooke.)

This is a drawing full of merit and feeling for sea; but there are five others by this artist in the room, and in all of them there is a green sea under a slight breeze, breaking on a flat shore. The sea thus represented six times over, is indeed very like salt-water, and the waves shake well along their edges, giving more suggestion than usual of the tremulousness which so often runs in a kind of electric current along the

whole length of a breaker's edge as it rises. But I sincerely hope Mr Cooke will make some effort to break from this slavery to one kind of wave. He might teach himself, and us, a serviceable lesson by resolving, on the first morning of summer, when there was a likelihood of unsettled, but not stormy weather during the day, to go down to the beach as soon after dawn as possible, and make a rapid sketch of the exact aspect of sea and sky at every two hours, as the day passed on, until sunset; afterwards trying to realize each with complete sincerity, and sending the 9 drawings as a series to the next Exhibition. He would find they attracted more notice than these repetitions of green breakers. 309 is, however, very lovely.

114. The Bay of Naples. (T. L. Rowbotham.)

What I said of Mr Rowbotham's work last year I must take leave to repeat, for I do believe there is the making of a good landscape painter in him. I think, in spite of all his artificialness, he has enthusiasm—loves what he tries to paint, and works hard; and where there is enthusiasm, and no shirking of labour, there is no saying what a painter may make of himself if once he takes the right turn of the road. Of the merely blottesque workman I have far less hope. He is often more right, as far as he reaches, than the enthusiastic one; but there is no growth in him. Mr Bennett, for instance, perhaps looks out of his green shades with contempt on Mr Rowbotham's white and blue, as feeling that he is simpler in heart, and truer in purpose. But then he purposes nearly nothing—loving fields and trees only with a serene, vegetative affection; whereas if Mr Rowbotham but once takes a fancy to finish one of his pretty subjects fairly on the spot—nay, if he but draws so much as the window of an Italian cottage completely his mind will be altered about many matters before the sketch is well dry; and then all his admiration of rocks and lakes

may be brought into good service. At present it is sufficiently sad to see him defrauding himself of the very picturesqueness he delights in, by painting out of what he supposes to be his head, but is, in reality, only his habit. He knows well enough, as well as I do, that those trios of similar windows (compare 130) are not particularly interesting; but he does not yet know that they are also impossible, and that there are the most delightful window groups to be had every day, and in every place, merely for the trouble of looking at them and noting them down.

182. Song of the Georgian Maiden. (H. Warren.)

Full of cleverness; but continually false in passages, owing to the violent striving for brilliancy. I do not dwell upon the errors, because so dexterous an artist must surely know them well enough himself, and I suppose therefore, he means, for the sake of dazzling, to persist in them.

207. In the Forest of Dean. (Edmund G. Warren.)

A very interesting study; the dark side of the trunk is singularly consistent and right in its gradations; the effect of the whole as true as it is possible for anything to be which is not delicately coloured, but depends for all its results on mere brown, grey, and green, laid in right chiaroscuro.

I fear the success is mechanical; but I wish that the younger Pre-Raphaelite painters, who cannot yet bring their details into true balance of force, would take note how much appearance of truth to nature has been obtained in this drawing merely by the consistent relations of its shade, and would try to give the same consistency to their own truer hues.

218. A Miracle Play. (Edward Corbould.)

An amusing subject, which would, however, have been more intelligible if Mr Corbould had quoted some

of the text of the play. I recollect reading it with great edification one wet day at Chester, some ten years ago, but I remember now only the heroic determination of Noah's wife, and the less heroic resolves of her gossips, expressed as follows; I cannot answer for the spelling:

Three Gossips: Here is a pottle full of Malmsey, gode and stronge,
Tho' Noe thynke us never so longe,
Yet we will drink alyke.

Noah's wife: Yea, Noe, set up your sayle,
And row forth with evylle hayle.
But I love my gossippes, each one.
One foote further will I not gone;
They shall not drown—*by Saint John*,
And I may save their lyffe.
But thou shalt let them into that kist,
Els, row forth, Noe, where thou list,
And gette thee a new wyf.

223. A Study. (T. Sutcliffe.)

The furze in this drawing is admirable, and the whole thing got straight from nature; but Mr Sutcliffe chooses his subjects ill, owing, I believe, to his not working enough in chiaroscuro merely, and allowing himself to be captivated by a single pretty bit, like those golden brambles on the purple rock, without considering whether the forms and arrangement of the whole are available. He should now study for some time with a view to arrangement only.

OLD SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

I congratulate the Society on its great advance this year. I have placed my notes on their drawings last because it is pleasant to stay latest with old friends.

15. Snowdon from Capel Curig. (D. Cox.)

Though Mr Cox's work is every year broader in handling, and therefore farther, as mere work, from the completeness I would generally advocate, it becomes always more majestic or more interesting in conception. I have deeper sympathy with some of his this year's drawings than with any I ever yet saw from his hand. This is a rich and beautiful one; but the bits please me most which no one but he would have thought of painting, and which are made pictures of by a little thing in the right place, as 178 is by the black and white dog. The bank above, and distance, are wonderful pieces of grey colour.

29. Gates at the Villa Somma Riva. (W. Evans.)

The drawing cannot be called good; but there is a new idea and vision of Gates in it: and it is therefore very noteworthy. But what does Mr Evans mean by this coarse way of work, with so much odd good, and so much odd wrong, in it? 57, for instance, has a great deal of good—and the violent wrong of vertical reflections of oblique lines, which spoils all; and 10 is very like Vesuvius and the Apennines in winter — a very certain piece of fact—but what very remarkable and objectionable mules!

33. Highland Gillie, with Dogs and Black Game.

I suffer intense anxiety to see this remarkable gillie, who never grows old, and who has had for the last ten years of Mr Tayler's painting him, the same little portcullis of carmine on his left cheek, and the same narrow stream of liquorice down his forehead and the right side of his nose.

It is not Presidential work, Mr Tayler—you know as well as I that it is not right; and you know, better than I, how much you could do with that facile hand of yours if you chose; it seems to me you might paint dogs and ponies as well as Landseer, and Highland gillies, full of life, with real Celtic blood in their cheeks, instead of these little tartan patterns of rouge, if you would only forego for a year or two the pretty praise of the drawing-room—despise for ever the boisterous praise of the stable—and set yourself to paint veritable human nature, instead of lay figures in tasselled caps (compare No. 132); and veritable dog form and power, instead of those little yelping (they *do* yelp, certainly!) compounds of bistre-blots and flakes of white, with dots in every eye to make them glitter.

46. A Mountain Torrent, late in Autumn. (C. Branwhite.)

Farther carried than the artist's usual work, expressing some sufficient solidity in the rocks, and reaching some grandeur of form in the hills. But whence came the idea of painting autumn in the Highlands without a mountain ash? nay, without one dead leaf or withered fern! I assume that this scene is to be imagined in the Highlands; it very certainly *is* nowhere; but it is more like a Scottish glen than a Welsh one (entirely unlike the Alps); and if Scottish scenery is pre-eminent in anything, it is just in the gold and scarlet of the mountain ashes in early November,

and in the way the dark purple rocks get studded with the dead leaves like golden byzants, the wind carrying them in whirls into their crannies, and the moist mists fastening them to the surfaces without washing them down, till every lonely crag looks like one of Veronese's purple robes embossed with gold. How it is possible for a painter to walk once through a Highland glen in autumn, and miss this, I cannot conceive; nor how Mr. Branwhite, possessing some real power of drawing, can like these various conditions of scratch and dash in brown paint better than curled tops of closing fern, or than the splendid iron-russet sprays of the dead heath-blossoms, soft here and there with faint lilac, where a living bell remains.

However, slight and affected as the work is, it is firmer than last year's; and we must hope better things for the future.

62. A Lingerer. (W. Turner.)

Not up to Mr Turner's usual work; but the only thing I have seen this year at all like heather. 172 is, however, a very impressive and precious drawing: full of truth in its far-off Highland hills, and glowing sky, and low-floating mists.

72. Sty Head Tarn, Cumberland. Early Morning (P. S. Jackson.)

Very pathetic and true in its waves of mist under sunrise; but too monotonous in colour of clouds. The rock foreground expresses faithfully the fact, too often overlooked, of a great rounded mass of slate splitting and gaping gradually under frost, giving a flat,bottomed block at the top, with a rounded back like a turtle's, and flat tabular masses in succession below, rounded on their outer edges.

112. A Winter Scene. Carting Ice. (E. Duncan.)

Carefully studied in some of its aërial effects; but

winter mists would be enchanting indeed, if they could turn trees into knots of serpents. It is very strange that Mr Duncan should work so conscientiously and quietly through the difficult part of his drawing, and yet not take the small pains which would have made the whole satisfactory, by sketching that tree on the left, and the pollard willow on the right, from nature. Any tree in the world would have done; and, when Mr Duncan does draw a tree from nature, he will find that a bough half a foot thick at the beginning of it, ramifies into more than two twigs at the end of it.

126. In the Sabine Hills. (Carl Haag.)

Very beautiful and right—up to the point sought. I have perhaps never before seen a piece of the Italian limestone, scorched dry in the sun, so thoroughly realized, whether in the lie of the oblique beds under the shrine, or in the mass on this side of the path spotted with black lichen. The distant mountain is very soft and lovely in colour, and quite as true as lovely. The reflected light in the roof of the shrine is rightly cast, and richly glowing. What can possibly be the matter with this picture—making it not a great one—for a great one assuredly it is not?

I believe the same things are the matter with it, only in a far less painful degree, which destroy so much of the value of Carl Haag's figure pieces—namely, a delight in texture rather than in forms or undulations of surface; or (in rougher words) in the skin rather than the make of things; farther—a delight in violent contrasts of colour rather than in finely invented harmonies of it (the same thing as the endeavour of a composer to get effect by passages of flute and harp after drum and trumpet, instead of by real invention of successions in chords), and lastly and chiefly, a tendency to stage sentiment rather than life sentiment: making him insist always more on costume than expression;

nay, in fact, always see costume first. And, observe, this error is not merely the common one of which the Pre-Raphaelites are so often accused (for the most part falsely), of painting accessories better than principalities, when the principalities are nevertheless seen and tried for. For in Carl Haag's work the principal things are *not* seen. A peasant offers herself to his eyes as a kind of book of patterns; the main phenomena of her are her cap and bodice; he cannot recover from the sensation of astonishment at her dress, so as to discern that there is a human being within it. A man is, in his eyes, mainly different from a chamois in wearing leggings: if Cadmus had sown hobnails instead of teeth, one might have expected a crop of such men as these. I verily believe that the best thing the painter could do would be to go to the Tyrol, and himself wear green breeches and a conical hat till he got quite used to them, and perceived that there was really nothing so awful nor wonderful in either, but that he might paint without being overpowered by their presence.

He is, however, doing better every year. This landscape seems to me a great step in advance, and I hope we shall have more of the kind. Carl Haag's forte, as it has been in worsted among men, will evidently be in lichens among rocks, but that is no reason why these respectable and long-lived vegetables should not have their painters. By the way, they and the fungi have all fortune's favour this year; for William Hunt's beautiful little picture (244) is the first, so far as I know, painted entirely in honour of the little ephemeral beauties, as Carl Haag's is the first which has entirely expressed the character of the black stains of mountain life which hardly change their shapes in a thousand years.

130. Lihou Island, near Guernsey. (P. J. Naftel.)

An excellent study of sea-shore. His Rocquain

Bay, 53, is hung so high that it is likely to escape notice; and this would be a pity, were it but for the beauty of the subject; it is pleasant to know what lovely lanes there are in the Channel Islands, in full green in this present spring time. Rather too green, I think, here on paper. Tree shadows are more violet.

197. Declining Day. View in Argyllshire. (A. P. Newton.)

It is curious what compensation time and tide bring for every evil. First come railroads to make us all restless; next come faithful painters, to draw everything so well that we needn't leave home to see it. Let Mr Newton but draw all the four sides of Ben Nevis as he has done this one, and nobody need ever go to the mountain again for the mere sake of seeing what it is like. I know all about it, nearly, already, though I never have been near it, merely by this one drawing—quite wonderful in its expression of Scottish hill form, and very right and noble in colour. I believe it was hastily finished under heavy disadvantage, owing to an accident which happened to the painter; the foreground is therefore coarse, and I think the lower purples of the mountain may, in another such drawing, be purer and lovelier; but the expression of its shaly sides and knotted crags cannot be much bettered.

In 145, the mountains are also nobly drawn, but the foreground is again incomplete; the houses and other near objects look mean and small.

285. An Italian Cottage Door. (Alfred Fripp.)

All of this painter's work in the room is of exceeding interest to me; more significative of progress, and more full in promise than any other; and that in three ways—in method of work, system of shade, and intenton of sentiment.

In method of work it is pure and straightforward,

truly *painted*; not sponged or washed; and in places completely finished. I cannot but suppose it is through mere accident and want of time that this principal subject (285) is so unequal in completion; portions of it are quite sketchy and coarse, while other portions of it even give hope that Mr Fripp may in due time not unworthily fill some of the places which John Lewis has left vacant on the walls. I feared at first on seeing how the face and dress of the mother were wrought, while the arbour and architecture were neglected, that Mr Fripp had not disentangled himself from the old fallacy about generalizing subordinate parts, but I see with comfort that some subordinate parts—the cat, winking in the sun, and the pinks, for instance, on the right hand—are carried nearly to faultless completion. On the whole I think that passage nearly the best bit of painting in the room. It has no look of painful elaboration; shows no stipple or mannerism of touch; appears to be done easily as well as completely, and is quite beautiful in the conception of its pale colour in the sun. But much has to be done yet, Mr Fripp. Our Italian mother is unsatisfactory; it is but smirking, not passionate maternity; her gown is well drawn, but not her body; our old woman plays her part of monster too monstrously; our vines will never grow any grapes. We must have everything up to the cat's mark next year, please.

Then in the second place: Mr Fripp's work is progressive in its system of shade, or rather of light. That Church of St Olivano (37) which looks so strange in its paleness among all the old fashioned watercolours about it, has had its colours carefully matched with sunshine. Only it will never do to leave hard edges and thin washes, if we are going to paint in that key. Treble notes must not be sharp and thin; the higher they are the more tender they must be, and in a certain sense the richer; it is the rich trebles that are sweet

and precious, not the meagre ones. The paler the tone of a picture the more sweet must be its textures, and the more subtle its gradations; else it will always look like a strange half-finished sketch, not as this picture really is, a most truthful study of sunlight. What people usually suppose to be like sunlight in pictures is only like twilight or lamp-light; this goes nearly as far towards Italian noonday as poor paper and colour can reach.

And in the third, but the chief place: all Mr Fripp's pictures are well designed, their subjects being chosen with great sense of the moral force and meaning of every incident; even the small figures in this are entirely right in conception. But he has not yet enough knowledge of the figure to carry out his purposes; he is, indeed, quite in a transitional state, hesitating between landscape and figures. I think, chiefly in consequence of the way he has put in those monks of St Olivano, that it will be quite worth his while to make the figures principal. No. 101, also, 'Evening on the Abruzzi mountains', is in idea a most beautiful picture; but of course neither the drawing of boy or dog is as yet possible to the artist; he must choose between retracting his figures into insignificance, and leaving only hills and clouds, or enabling himself, by a good hard year or two's work, to draw the figures rightly. I hope he will choose the steeper path.

244. Fungi. (W. H. Hunt.)

That we may have the pleasure of parting with words of unqualified praise, we must look last at this exquisite drawing, and therefore must glance, somewhat out of their order, at Mr Palmer's 'Going to India', 256, which looks at first cruder and harsher than it is, but gains by a long look, and has deep feeling in it; and so, taking what good there is on the screens as we pass (especially Carl Haag's 'Arch at Spalatro', another of the save-trouble drawings which are as good

as seeing the thing itself) to Mr Hunt's 'View from Richmond Hill', 306, very notable for its air, and sunshine, and quaint expression of the contentment of the worthy English middle classes in sitting on benches beside park palings: as well as for its expression of all the ugliest and intensely characteristic qualities of our English elms, and, indeed, of our English trees generally, which always appear to me, as compared with French trees, to grow in paroxysms of *mauvaise honte*, sticking out their elbows everywhere in the wrong places, and stiffening themselves against every breeze that would bend them into grace, till all their leaves stand on end at last in sheer misery and shame at the shapes they have been got into. Then to the 'Peach and Grapes', 314, wherein note the wonderful light in dark of the peach's dark side, and the subtle finish of composition by help of the strawberry, whose stalk follows and relieves the curve of the round peach, and with the raised point of its green receptacle (or whatever the botanists call it) expresses its sympathy, as far as a strawberry can, with the descending curve of the bunch of grapes. Then across to 232, one of the very noblest fruit pieces which Mr Hunt ever painted; and look well at the greengages, and the brown spots in the shadow on them. How he gets that stalk, with all its faint colour, to stand out, as it clearly does, an inch from the plums, so that but for the glass, it is all but [1] morally certain we might lay hold of it, passes nearly all the mysteries of imitative painting I have seen. And thus, lastly, to these scarlet—no, not scarlet, nor crimson, nor in any wise speakably coloured fungi, for which, with a serious heart, I thank the painter, and with more thanks than I can give for any other picture here, as having best shown us the gracious splendour which there is in the meanest herb of the field.

[1] Not *quite* certain—there is a shade of doubt about its tangibility, just enough to keep it in its rank of noble painting. All entirely deceptive work is bad.

NOTES ON SOME OF
THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES
EXHIBITED IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY,
THE OLD AND NEW SOCIETIES OF
PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS, THE
SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS, AND
THE FRENCH EXHIBITION
No V: 1859.

PREFACE

I HOPE henceforward to do without preface; for the real state of our schools in any given year cannot be described in few words, and after the most earnest analysis of the causes of advance or decline, the real result will always be inexplicable. Great painters will every now and then appear when no one expects them; or perhaps disappear suddenly through trap doors without any visible reason for their exit; and the critic can only congratulate in simplicity, or lament in amazement. The present Exhibition shows steady advance among the younger students; the more experienced masters, whether Academic or Pre-Raphaelite, are either absent or indolent; but I have never seen the Academy walls show so high an average of good work.

NOTES

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

12. Reminiscences of the Ball. (G. D. Leslie.)

It must be a great delight to Mr Leslie to see his son do such good work as this. There is not a prettier little piece of painting on the walls, and very few half so pretty. All the accessories, too, are at once quaint and graceful: showing an enjoyment of elegance in form (even down to the design of the frame of the picture, and the bars of the chair), which is very rare among the young painters of the rising school. This grace of fancy is shown no less in the little Chinese subject by the same artist (351), which, however, is not quite so thoroughly painted. I shall look anxiously for Mr Leslie's work next year, for he seems to have truly the power of composition, and that is the gift of gifts if it be rightly used. He colours very well already.

13. A Boy in Florentine Costume. (J. B. Hay.)

Very masterly and complete in effect, and like the Val d'Arno: so also its companion, No. 173. But the intention of this latter is mistaken. An English boy, however luxuriously bred, has usually twenty times the firmness in his face that an Italian one has. Italian boys are beautiful—full of vitality and roguery; lazy, and, on the whole, well fed, wherever I have seen them. There is more misery of an outward and physical kind in a couple of London back-streets than in a whole Italian town. Mental degradation,

not physical suffering, constitutes the slavery of Italy —both constitute that of England. Italian slavery is infinitely grander than ours. The souls of Italy at least need iron bars to bind them; ours need only the threads of purses.

15. The Vale of Rest. (J. E. Millais, A.)

I have no doubt the beholder is considerably offended at first sight of this picture—justifiably so, considering what might once have been hoped for from its painter; but unjustifiably, if the offence taken prevents his staying by it; for it deserves his study. 'We are offended by it.' Granted. Perhaps the painter did not mean us to be pleased. It may be that he supposed we should have been offended if we had seen the real nun digging her real grave [1]; that she and it might have appeared to us not altogether pathetic, romantic, or sublime; but only strange, or horrible; and that he chooses to fasten this sensation upon us rather than any other.

It is a temper into which many a good painter has fallen before now. You would not find it a pleasant thing to be left at twilight in the church of the Madonna of the Garden at Venice, with the last light falling on the skeletons—half alive, dreamy, stammering skeletons—shaking the dust off their ribs, in Tintoret's 'Last Judgment'. Perhaps even you might not be at your ease before one or two pale crucifixes which I remember of Giotto's and other not mean men, where the dark red runlets twine and trickle from the feet down to the skull at the root of the cross. Many an ugly spectre and ghastly face has been painted by the gloomier German workmen before now, and been in some sort approved by us; nay, there

[1] I believe, in point of fact, nuns neither dig their own graves nor erect tombstones: but we will take the picture on its own terms.

is more horror by far, of a certain kind, in modern French works—Vernet's 'Eylau' and 'Plague', and such like, which we do not hear any one declaim against (nay, which seem to meet a large division of public taste)—than in this picture which so many people call 'frightful'.

Why *so* frightful? Is it not because it is so nearly beautiful? Because the dark green field, and windless trees, and purple sky might be so lovely to persons unconcerned about their graves?

Or is it that the faces are so ugly? You would have liked them better to be fair faces, such as would grace a drawing-room, and the grave to be dug in prettier ground—under a rose-bush or willow, and in turf set with violets—nothing like a bone visible as one threw the mould out. So, it would have been a sweet piece of convent sentiment.

I am afraid that it is a good deal more like real convent sentiment as it is. Death, confessed for king before his time, asserts, so far as I have seen, some authority over such places; either unperceived, and then the worst, in drowsy unquickening of the soul; or felt and terrible, pouring out his white ashes upon the heart—ashes that burn with cold. If you think what the kind of persons who have strength of conviction enough to give up the world, might have done for the world had they *not* given it up: and how the King of Terror must rejoice when he wins for himself another soul that might have gone forth to calm the earth; and folds his wide, white wings over it for ever: He also gathering his children together; and how those white sarcophagi, towered and belfried, each with his companies of living dead, gleam still so multitudinous among the mountain pyramids of the fairest countries of the earth: places of silence for their sweet voices places of binding for their faithfullest hands; places of fading for their mightiest intelligences: you may, perhaps feel also, that so great wrong cannot be lovely

in the near aspect of it; and that if this very day, at evening, we were allowed to see what the last clouds of twilight glow upon in some convent garden of the Apennines, we might leave the place with some such horror as this picture will leave upon us; not all of it noble horror, but in some sort repulsive and ignoble.

It is, for these reasons, to me, a great work: nevertheless, part of its power is not to the painter's praise. The crude painting is here in a kind of harmony with the expression of discord which was needed. But it is crude—not in momentary compliance with the mood which prompted this wild design; but in apparent consistency of decline from the artist's earlier ways of labour. Pass to his other picture, the 'Spring', and we find the colour not less abrupt, though more vivid.

And when we look at this fierce and rigid orchard—this angry blooming—petals, as it were, of japanned brass; and remember the lovely wild roses and flowers scattered on the stream in the 'Ophelia'; there is, I regret to say, no ground for any diminution of the doubt which I expressed two years since, respecting the future career of a painter who can fall thus strangely beneath himself.

The power has not yet left him. With all its faults, and they are grievous, this is still mighty painting: nothing else is as strong, or approximately as strong, within these walls. But it is a phenomenon, so far as I know, unparalleled hitherto in art-history, that any workman capable of so much should rest content with so little. All former art, by men of any intellect, has been wrought, under whatever limitations of time, as well as the painter could do it; evidently with an effort to reach something beyond what was actually done: if a sketch, the sketch showed a straining towards completion; if a picture, it showed a straining to a higher perfection; but here, we have a careless and insolent indication of things that might be—not

the splendid promise of a grand impatience, but the scrabbled remnant of a scornfully abandoned aim.

And this wildness of execution is strangely associated with the distortion of feature which more or less has been sought for by this painter from his earliest youth; just as it was by Martin Schongauer and Mantegna. In the first picture (from Keat's *Isabella*) which attracted public attention, the figure in the foreground writhed in violence of constrained rage: in the picture of the 'Holy Family at Nazareth', the Virgin's features were contorted in sorrow over a wounded hand; violent ugliness of feature spoiled a beautiful arrangement of colour in the 'Return of the Dove', and disturbed a powerful piece of dramatic effect in the 'Escape from the Inquisition'. And in this present picture, the unsightliness of some of the faces, and the preternatural grimness of others, with the fierce colour and angular masses of the flowers above, force upon me a strange impression, which I cannot shake off—that this is an illustration of the song of some modern Dante, who, at the first entrance of an inferno for English society, had found, carpeted with ghostly grass, a field of penance for young ladies; where girl-blossoms, who had been vainly gay, or treacherously amiable, were condemned to recline in reprobation under red-hot apple blossom, and sip scalding milk out of a poisoned porringer.

40. The Night before Naseby. (A. L. Egg, A.)

An interesting contribution to the store of hints for better understanding of English history which painters and poets are now continually throwing out for us. This scene is, however, hardly strange enough to have the look of reality: it is what we should, or could, all imagine about Cromwell; while most likely, if we had really been able to look into his tent the night before Naseby, the look of him would have been something different from what we should have imag-

ined. A picture which is not at first a little wonderful to us, can hardly at last be true to us.

63. A Huff. (J. Philip.)

Full of powerful and dexterous painting; but ungraceful, and slightly vulgar. This last character is given chiefly by the brilliancy of petticoat and chenille, prevailing at once over passions, faces, and landscape. It is, indeed, quite right to elaborate details; but not the ignoblest details first and best. All! or none. If chenille, then, *a fortiori*—orange bough and blossom; if blue petticoat, *a fortiori*—blue sky. The orange tree, it might be said, would have spoiled the faces if it had been made out? Then put something behind them that will not spoil them, but always paint it well, whatever it is.

95. The late Captain Sir Charles Hotham. (G. Richmond, A.)

This is a very noble portrait; full of simple and manly character; vigorous and complete in workmanship: but all the best of it is here lost, and what deficiency exists in its dark colour brought out, both by its height above the eye, and by the neighbourhood of the white dresses in the portraits beneath it; and thus a great injustice is done to the painter, and a real loss (for it is a serious one not to see this admirably wrought head better) caused to the public, merely for the sake of the symmetries of the saloon; that a diagonal line of general in No. 95, may balance a diagonal line of lady in No. 69. In the Louvre, at this moment, the French use their best old pictures, the treasures of Europe, in the same way, and hang Titian's and Rubens' portraits to balance each other, forty feet above the eye. Such treatment of great pictures is simply, and in the full sense of the word, 'savage'; such things cannot be done, whether by us here, or by the French in the Louvre, but in a clownish ignorance

of the meaning of the word 'picture'; and of the entire value and purpose of painting. And, indeed, when the pictures are wholly precious and perfect, like the Titian with the red capped St Joseph, which the French have hung high out of sight in the Louvre, or like the Sir Joshua's Holy Family which we have thrust into the darkest room in Marlborough House, 'clownish' is not a strong enough word for the mischief; 'savage' is the accurate expression. A clown buys ornaments for his cottage chimney-piece, without much understanding of their merit as works of art, but at least he puts them where he can see them. But your savage, to whom, after much polite and instructive conversation about England, thinking to deepen the impression on his mind, you make a present of miniatures of the Queen and Prince Albert, presently attaches the Queen to one ear and Prince Albert to the other, and dances round you with a howl. We two great nations, French and English, 'wear' our noble pictures precisely in this manner.

It is to be hoped that in the arrangement of the building about to be raised for the occupation of the Academy, the fact may be at last acknowledged, that a picture which is worth seeing at all is worth seeing well; that a picture gallery needs space, but not height —and rational sequence, not overwhelming concentration, of its treasures.

The portrait of the Dean of Westminster, No. 510, shows Mr Richmond's power more satisfactorily.

113. Clarkson Stanfield, Esq., R.A. (D. Macnee.)

A good portrait; only Mr Stanfield's eyes are more piercing, even in general, and must be especially so when he is sketching. And surely the portrait of a landscape painter ought to have a background. Velasquez always allows his admirals a little sea; might not Mr Stanfield have had at least a rock and a wave.

135. Waiting for the Ferry Boat—Upper Egypt. (J. F. Lewis, A.)

Well, of course, it is very nice. Housings and camels—palm trees—clouds, and Sheik. But waiting for a ferry-boat is dull work; and are we never to get out of Egypt any more? nor to perceive the existence of any living creatures but Arabs and camels? Is there nothing paintable in England, nor Spain, nor Italy? Or, in the East, if we *must* live in the East, is no landscape ever visible but a dead level of mud raised two feet above a slow stream. I have heard of lovely hills and convents at Athos—of green trees and flowing waters at Damascus—of mighty rocks at Petra and Mount Hor—of wonderful turrets and enamelled walls at Cairo; surely the mosaic of a marble turret is as pretty a thing to paint as a camel-housing; and it would take no more trouble to draw the ridges of an Arabian mountain than the folds of that everlasting Sheik's cloak! We go to this melancholy Egypt through plague, and mosquitoes, and misery of every sort—and all we see for our pains is a camel with a fine carpet on his back. Cannot we see that any day at the Zoological Gardens? But the Sphinx, and the temples, and the hieroglyphics, and the mirage, and simoom; and everything that we want to know about, and that one would be so thankful to have painted properly;—shall we never have any of these? It is too unkind of you, Mr Lewis; and it serves you quite right to be put up there, where nobody can see a bit of your good work, but only your dull subject. But what is this we have got put underneath you, which looks like a tobacconist's sign; a valuable work it is to be hoped—let us see.

137. The Fusee. (A. Cooper, R.A.)

The sublime of English art, truly! A lake, with ingenious white touches at the edges, to mark it from the mountains; some rocks of leather; sky-

blue heather; wooden-headed people, displaying themselves in the athletic exercise of smoking, and a pool of water, with vertical reflections of sloping lines! A superb art lesson for the line of the Academy —heroic and optical at once; it is interesting, especially, to see that, in the present state of British science, one may write R.A. after one's name, yet not be able to paint a gutter.

160. The Church of Sta Maria della Salute. (D. Roberts, R.A.)

My dear Mr Roberts, *is* this like a church built of white Carrara marble? La Salute is verily as white as snow in some places; black-spotted or ochre-spotted in others; but delicate and lovely everywhere. And then the gondoliers! still always where they couldn't possibly row! It would be very comfortable for gondoliers if they might stand in the middle of the boat close by the canopy; but to their sorrow, sometimes to their misfortune, they must stand far back, poised on the point of the giddy stern. I say 'sometimes to their misfortune', for, as if specially to illustrate Mr Leslie's [1] declaration, in defence of Canaletto against some fault-finding of mine, that the water 'as it approached the houses was sheltered from the breeze, my strongest gondolier was blown off his perch into the canal at my own door one day, just opposite this very church, and had nearly been brained against the doorstep.'

I must regret Mr Roberts' abandonment of his old picturesque subjects for these severe ones. He had a great gift of expressing the ins and outs of Spanish balconies and roofs, and the hollow work of complex tracery, and all his skill of this kind is now passing away into formal architectural drawing in brown and grey. His old painting of the spires of Burgos Cathe-

[1] *Handbook for Young Painters*, p. 269.

dral—of its turreted chapter-house—the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella—the towers and courts of the Alhambra, etc., involved points of interest and displays of skill which none of his subjects at present either contain or admit; while their generally smaller size prevented the painter's wearying at his work, and enabled us to have five or six subjects each year instead of two.

165. Mary Magdalen. (J. R. Herbert, R.A.)

Very beautiful, and an interesting example of the noble tendency of modern religious art to conceive scenes as they really in probability occurred; not in merely artistic modification or adaptation.

The picture tells its story sufficiently, and needs no comment. It is not of high artistic merit, but a sincere and gentle conception, adequately, and therefore very touchingly, expressed.

167. 'Just as the Twig is Bent'. (W. Mulready, R.A.)

I see that this picture has been depreciatingly spoken of in several of the journals. I think unjustly so. It is as good as Mr Mulready's work usually is. I had occasion last year to point out the general defect of that work—namely, that the painter is evidently thinking only of himself and his drawing—never caring the least about what he has to draw; of which, therefore, he misses precisely the most valuable characters, and succeeds in using more skill in painting Nothing than any painter ever spent before on that subject.

If the trees in the background are supposed to be typical of education, they ought to have been better grown. Mr Mulready's trees are often supposed by artists to be well drawn, merely because they are well *rounded*. But they are, nevertheless, mannered in execution, and false in tree anatomy.

190. Barley Harvest on the Welsh Coast. (C. P Knight.)

A delightful subject, forcibly, because harmoniously, rendered, though without any subtlety of execution. I am glad to observe how much the public enjoy a piece of plain fact like this, plainly told ; and how they rejoice in their gradual discovery that ground may be golden and sea blue, no less than brown and grey.

211. Jeanie Deans and Queen Caroline. (C. R. Leslie, R.A.)

The more I learn of art, the more respect I feel for Mr Leslie's painting, as such ; and for the way it brings out the expressional result he requires. Given a certain quantity of oil colour to be laid with one touch of pencil, so as to produce at once the subtlest and largest expressional result possible, and there is no man now living who seems to me to come at all near Mr Leslie, his work being, in places, equal to Hogarth for decision, and here and there a little lighter and more graceful (Hogarth always laying his colour somewhat in daubs and spots). But I am obliged to write above, 'the result he (Mr Leslie) requires', as being very completely distinguished from the result that other people might possibly require. So long, indeed, as Mr Leslie is dealing only with delicate, lady-like, or gentleman-like expression, he is a consummately faithful artist. I cannot help referring once more to his exquisite Belinda and her lover, in his 'Rape of the Lock', as types of all that can be asked in such painting ; and in this picture before us—the Queen, —and still more the dark-robed Lady Suffolk, are quite beautiful ; as also, in No. 152, Lady Percy. But Jeanie, here ! and Harry, there ! Alas, the day ! Examine the two pictures well ; they are among the most instructive that ever yet appeared on the Academy walls, in showing the possibility of entering com-

pletely into the spirit of the gracefulnesses of society, without the power of conceiving Heroism. To a certain extent, the mind of Reynolds was of this stamp. He could conceive a most refined lord or lady, but not a saint or Madonna: and his best hero, Lord Heathfield, is but an obstinate old English gentleman after all.

Gainsborough takes very nearly the same view of us. Hogarth laughs at or condemns us. Leslie, accustomed to high English life, supposes that this was Harry Percy's way of wearing his spurs. Is it not a rather strange matter, that our seers or painters, contemplating the English nation, cannot, all of them put together, paint an English hero? Nothing more than an English gentleman in an obstinate state of mind about keys; with an expression which I can conceive so exceedingly stout a gentleman of that age as occasionally putting on, even respecting the keys of the cellaret. Pray, consider of it a little, good visitors to the Royal Academy in the afternoon, whether it is altogether the painter's fault, or anybody else's!

237. A Maltese Xebec, on the Rocks of Procida. (C. Stanfield, R.A.)

It is rather singular that the castle of Ischia, which appears in the distance of this picture, is almost the only piece of really picturesque architecture which is to be found on the Academy walls this year.

It is not, perhaps, one of Mr Stanfield's best works, but his mountain forms are always true and bold; and after infinite and infinitesimal calls upon one's sympathy from leaves and dragonflies, one is glad of a piece of solid rock and wall, about which one is not expected to 'feel' anything particular.

310. Sunday in the Backwoods. (T. Faed.)

This will of course be a very popular picture, and

deserves to be so, having every claim to our observance which kindly feeling and steady average painting can give it. It does not possess any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos. The figure of the healthy sister, looking up, seems to me the best.

316. The Rose Garland. (W. C. T. Dobson.)

Evidently a most faithful portrait (colour only excepted) of a dear, good little girl—such an one as may be seen often enough, Heaven be praised, at cottage-doors in England, or in France, or in Germany, or in Switzerland, or, I suppose, in Sweden. South of the Alps or Pyrenees, or east of the Carpathians, one finds that kind of face no more. What does that peculiar northern sweetness consist in, which never showed itself, even to Giotto, nor to Raphael?—their beauty being of another kind wholly; more pensive, less wise, and less active.

329. Felice Ballarin reciting Tasso. (F. Goodall, A.)

This is a great advance beyond all Mr Goodall's former work; it is entirely higher in aim, and deeper in rendering of character: the subject interesting; the faces, for the most part, evidently portraits, and good portraits (especially those dark ones of the men in the background), the colour, in some separate portions, rich and good, showing qualities which never before appeared to be in the least sought for, much less reached by the painter. In fact, Mr Goodall has been looking at Titian instead of Wilkie, and that makes a large difference in what will be got by looking.

Nevertheless the picture is far from right yet: and its failure involves an important principle, which it may be of use to state generally, at a time when nearly all our younger painters are making those vigorous efforts in new directions. It is wholly impossible to paint an effect of sunlight truly. It never has been

done, and never will be. Sunshine is brighter than any mortal can paint, and all resemblances to it must be obtained by sacrifice. In order to obtain a popularly effective sunlight, colour must be sacrificed. De Hoogh, Cuyp, Claude, Both, Richard Wilson, and all other masters of sunshine, invariably reach their most telling effects by harmonies of gold with grey, giving up the blues, rubies, and freshest greens. Turner did the same in his earlier work. Modern Pre-Raphaelites, and Turner in his later work, reached magnificent effects of sunshine colour, but of a kind necessarily unintelligible to the ordinary observer (as true sunshine colour will always be, since it is impossible to paint it of the pitch of light which has true relation to its shadows). And thus the 'Sun of Venice', and the 'Slave Ship', with Hunt's 'Two Gentlemen of Verona', 'Stray Sheep', and such others, failed of almost all their due effect on the popular mind.

In landscape, nevertheless, to which sunshine is often necessary as part of its expression, the sacrifice must be made; and the public will, in time, understand it. But in figures, sunshine is rarely a necessary part of the expression; and all figure pictures in which it is introduced must be, to a certain extent, offensive. The obstinate endeavours of the Pre-Raphaelites to get vermilion transparencies and purple shadows into flesh, have been one of the principal and most justifiable grounds of the long opposition to them. And all great work whatsoever, of the highest school, refuses sunlight; and admits only a kind of glowing twilight, like that of Italy, a quarter of an hour after sunset.

Under these circumstances, choice must be made firmly and completely. Give up your sunlight, and you may get Titian's twilight. Give up your Titianesque depth, and you may, by thorough study from nature, get some approximation to noonday flame. But you cannot have both. Mr Goodall has attempted

both, and, of course, missed both—chiefly his sunshine, from mere inattention to its effects. For instance, the woman sitting on the right, with the green petticoat, has her lap in sunshine, her head in shade. Whatever light touches the head would be reflected light, and it would be reflected from the ground, shining strongly under her brows and on the lower part of her face; instead of which there is a shadow under the brow, exactly as if she were sitting in a room with ordinary daylight entering from above through a window. The picture is full of grammatical error of the same kind—the kind of error which in these days of earnest effort and accurate science, artists should get quit of with their long-clothes and spelling-books; whereas now, to the middle or even the close of life, they remain encumbered among petty misunderstandings, and wondering why they cannot make their art beautiful, when they have never taken the pains to make it right. There are, of course, just three simple stages of study to be gone through by every student. He has first to learn to draw a solid body in perfect light and shade, without sunlight. Then to paint it, also without sunlight; taking subjects that will give no trouble about their expression or sentiment. Then to put it into sunshine, and paint it there also, until he knows precisely the kind of difference in treatment required for it. And then—not till then—he may be able partially to colour the human face.

All this is just as simple and rational in method of procedure as practising scales in music before we try to play sonatas. But we always try to learn our painting upside down.

368. The Evening Song. (A. Rankling.)

A pretty thought, but not well enough painted. The sky has been caught from nature; but with too little precision; the perspective of the retiring ranks of cloud being missed.

Are our village children taught at present to sing the evening hymn in such an obstreperous manner, as to frighten the geese ?

369. Luff, Boy ! (J. C. Hook, A.)

War with France ? It may be ; and they say good ships are building at Cherbourg. War with Russia ? That also is conceivable ; and the Russians invent machines that explode under water by means of knobs. War with the fiend in ourselves ? That may not so easily come to pass, he and we being in close treaty hitherto, yet perhaps in good time may be looked for. And against enemies, foreign or internal, French, Sclavonic, or demoniac, what arms have we to count upon ? I hear of good artillery practice at Woolwich—of new methods of sharpening sabres invented by Sikhs—of a modern condition of the blood of Nessus, which sets sails on fire, and makes an end of Herculean ships, like Phœnixes. All which may perhaps be well, or perhaps ill, for us. But, if our enemies want to judge of our proved weapons and armour, let them come and look here. Bare head, bare fist, bare foot, and blue jacket. If these will not save us—nothing will.

A glorious picture—most glorious—'Hempen bridle and horse of tree'. Nay, rather, backs of the blue horses, foam-fetlocked, rearing beside us as we ride, tossing their tameless crests, with deep-drawn thunder in their overtaking tread. I wonder if Mr Hook when he drew that boy thought of the Elgin marbles ; the helmetless, unsworded, unarmoured men of Marathon. I think not : the likeness is too lovely to be conscious : it is all the more touching. They also, the men of Marathon, horsemen riding upon horses, given them of the Sea God. The earth struck by the trident takes such shape—a white wave, with its foaming mane and its crested head, made living for them.

And the quiet steersman, too, with his young brow

knit, to whom father and brother are trusted—and more than they. I would we had such faithful arms, however feeble, at all helms.

Infinite thanks, Mr Hook, for this; for our 'Brook of Human Life' also (250), and our 'Hours of listless Sway on gentle Wave' (493). All of them beautiful. The distant landscape in that brook scene is one of the sweetest ever found by painter—for found it evidently is—not composed; as well as Mr Redgrave's beautiful distance in 218.

390. Barley Harvest. (H. C. Whaite.)

Very exquisite in nearly every respect; perhaps, take it all in all, the most covetable bit of landscape of this year, and showing good promise, it seems to me, if the painter does not overwork himself needlessly. The execution of the whole by minute and similar touches is a mistake; certain textures need to be so produced, and certain complexities of form, but the work is never good unless it varies with every part of the subject, and is different in method, according to the sort of surface or form required. Nothing finished can be done without labour; but a picture can hardly be more injured than by the quantity of labour in it which is lost. Uncontributive toil is one of the forms of ruin.

Mr Whaite's drawing, 1,001, is also very lovely in conception, and right in form of cloud. It is slightly affected by the same error as the oil-painting. Compare with it the interesting study opposite, by Mr A. W. Hunt (997), entirely well meant, but suffering under the same oppression of plethoric labour. I do not often, in the present state of the English school, think it advisable to recommend 'breadth', but assuredly both Mr Whaite and Mr Hunt, if they wish to do themselves justice, ought to give up colour for a little while, and work with nothing but very ill-made charcoal which will not cut to a point.

While we are examining these minor landscapes, it is worth while returning to the west room to glance at Mr Raven's 'Saintfoin in bloom' (574), which is more easy in touch, and very harmonious in the light and shade of the figures; and at Mr Oakes' richly, but vainly wrought foreground, with nothing beyond it (525.)

Mr Boyce's 'East Lynn' (682) is of higher temper. It is curious how few people seem to feel the solemn difference between sun and shade—in the breadth of both, which he has endeavoured to render there. Many other studies of great interest may be found scattered on the walls, in which, while there is much to be admired, this is generally to be regretted, that the painters, not being able to do their work entirely well, think to make progress by doing a great quantity of work moderately well, which will by no means answer the purpose. We cannot learn to paint leaves by painting trees-full; nor grass by painting fields-full. Learning to paint one leaf rightly is better than constructing a whole forest of leaf definitions.

441. God's Gothic. (Miss A. Blunden.)

An entirely earnest and very notable study. It looks hard at first (and indeed *is* a little hard at last); but the appearance of too conspicuous green in the sea, which principally causes the harshness, will be found to diminish after a steady look; the fact being that the sea is often of this colour, only the bright sunlight of nature, which no painting can equal, accounts for it to our sensations. But if Miss Blunden can make her handling a little more tender, the colour may be as bright without looking wrong. She has tried hard, not without fair success, to express the rise of the wave—hardly visible in the long swell—till the foam shows at its edge; the wet shingle is also

very good; the boat well drawn; and the beds of pointed 'Gothic' wonderfully true in bend, as well as various in colour.

480. The Burgesses of Calais. (H. Holiday.)

A well-conceived and interesting scene: the face of the knight successful; that of the wife is a little beyond the painter's strength. It is a fair representation of the class of pictures now produced in numbers by the advancing school, which, with considerable merit, have the general demerit of making us feel in an instant that they would never have been painted had not others shown how; and the greater demerit of slightly blunting the enjoyment of the work of original men. Nevertheless, in every school these engrafted pictures must exist; and it is a cause for sincere congratulation when the habit which is becoming derivatively universal, is to read human nature and history with sympathy for nobleness, and desire for truth.

492. The Rev. F. D. Maurice. (L. Dickinson.)

Like and good; an entirely well-meant and well wrought portrait; coming a little hard, in consequence of the endeavour to paint all the expression of an expressive face; but it is a good fault. Our portraits are in general wanting in power, owing to a misunderstanding of Sir Joshua; and the idea that his playful tenderness and easy precision are imitable by slovenliness.

Generally speaking, portraiture may be divided into three great schools: the greatest is the Venetian, headed by Titian, and entirely right; on one side of it, is the German school, headed by Holbein, erring slightly on the side of intenseness and force of definition; on the other side of it, the English school, headed by Sir Joshua, erring slightly on the side of

facility and grace of abstraction [1]. Now, the Venetians and Sir Joshua are, for the present, wholly inimitable; but Holbein is imitable, and is the best model for us.

609. The King's Orchard. (A. Hughes.)

Mr Hughes' exquisite sense of colour and delicacy of design are seen to less advantage than usual. He has been allowing himself to go astray by indulging too much in his chief delight of colour; and this picture, which was quite lovely when I saw it last year incomplete, is now throughout too gay, and wanting in sweetness of shade; but most accomplished and delicious in detached passages; and the apple-blossom, among all its ruddy rivals on the walls this year, is tenderly, but triumphantly, victorious—it is the only blossom which is soft enough in texture, or round enough in bud. There is the making of a magnificent painter in Mr Hughes: but he must for some time yet stoop to conquer; be content with cottagers' instead of kings' orchards, and bow to the perhaps distressing but assured fact that a picture can be no more wholly splendid than it can be wholly white.

900. Too Late. (W. L. Windus.)

Something wrong here: either this painter has been ill [2]: or his picture has been sent in to the Academy in a hurry; or he has sickened his temper and dimmed his sight by reading melancholy ballads. There is great grandeur in the work; but it cannot for a moment be compared with Burd Helen. On the whole

[1] For the sake of simplicity of conception, Velasquez must be classed with the Venetians, to whom he belongs in right of his style, and Vandyck with the English; in fact, he, with Sir Joshua and Gainsborough, constitute the whole school.

[2] I fear this has been the fact. See the Postscript, at the end of these pages.

young painters must remember this great fact, that painting as a mere physical exertion, requires the utmost possible strength of constitution and of heart. A stout arm, a calm mind, a merry heart, and a bright eye are essential to a great painter. Without all these he can, in a great and immortal way, do nothing.

Wherefore, all puling and pining over deserted ladies, and knights run through the body, is, to the high artistic faculty, just so much poison. Frequent the company of right-minded and nobly-souled persons; learn all athletic exercises, and all delicate arts; music more especially; torment yourself neither with fine philosophy nor impatient philanthropy—but be kind and just to everybody; rise in the morning with the lark and whistle in the evening with the blackbird; and in time you may be a painter. Not otherwise.

908. Val d'Aosta. (J. Brett.)

Yes, here we have it at last—some close-coming to it at least—historical landscape, properly so called—landscape painting with a meaning and a use. We have had hitherto plenty of industry, precision quite unlimited—but all useless, or nearly so, being wasted on scenes of no majesty or enduring interest. Here is, at last, a scene worth painting—painted with all our might (not quite with all our heart, perhaps, but with might of hand and eye). And here, accordingly, for the first time in history, we have, by help of art, the power of visiting a place, reasoning about it, and knowing it, just as if we were there, except only that we cannot stir from our place, nor look behind us. For the rest, standing before this picture is just as good as standing on that spot in Val d'Aosta, so far as gaining of knowledge is concerned; and perhaps in some degree pleasanter, for it would be very hot on that rock to-day, and there would probably be a

disagreeable smell of juniper plants growing on the slopes above.

So if any simple-minded, quietly-living person, indisposed towards railroad stations or crowded inns, cares to know in an untroublous and uncostly way what a Piedmontese valley is like in July, there it is for him. Rocks overlaid with velvet and fur to stand on in the first place. If you look close into the velvet you will find it is jewelled and set with stars in a stately way. White poplars by the roadside, shaking silvery in the wind. I regret to say the wind is apt to come up the Val d'Aosta in an ill-tempered and rude manner, turning leaves thus the wrong side out; but it will be over in a moment. Beyond the poplars you may see the slopes of arable and vineyard ground, such as give the wealth and life to Italy which she idly trusts in. Ground laid ages ago in wreaths, like new cut hay by the mountain streams, now terraced and trimmed into all gentle service. If you want to know what vines look like under Italian training (far from the best), *that* is the look of them—the dark spots and irregular cavities, seen through the broken green of their square-set ranks, distinguishing them at any distance from the continuous pale fields of low set staff and leaf, divided by no gaps of gloom, which clothe a true vine country. There, down in the mid-valley, you see what pasture and meadow-land we have, we Piedmontese, with our hamlet and cottage life, and groups of glorious wood. Just beyond the rock are two splendid sweet chesnut trees, with forming fruit, good for making bread of, no less than maize; lower down, far to the left, a furlong or two of the main stream with its white shore and alders: not beautiful, for it has come down into all this fair country from the Cormayeur glaciers, and is yet untamed, cold, and furious, incapable of rest. But above, there is rest, where the sunshine streams into iridescence through branches of pine, and turns the pastures into strange

golden clouds, half grass half dew; for the shadows of the great hills have kept the dew there since morning. Rest also, calm enough, among the ridges of rock and forest that heap themselves into that purple pyramid, high on the right. Look well into the making of it—it is indeed so, that a great mountain is built and bears itself, and its forest fringes, and village jewels—for those white spots far up the ravine are villages—and peasant dynasties are hidden among the film of blue. And above all are other more desolate dynasties—the crowns that cannot shake—of jagged rock; they also true and right, even to their finest serration. So it is, that the snow lies on those dark diadems for ever. A notable picture truly; a possession of much within a few feet square.

Yet not, in the strong, essential meaning of the word, a noble picture. It has a strange fault, considering the school to which it belongs—it seems to me wholly emotionless. I cannot find from it that the painter loved, or feared, anything in all that wonderful piece of the world. There seems to me no awe of the mountains there—no real love of the chesnuts or the vines. Keenness of eye and fineness of hand as much as you choose; but of emotion, or of intention, nothing traceable. Not but that I believe the painter to be capable of the highest emotion: any one who can paint thus must have passion within him; but the passion here is assuredly not out of him. He has cared for nothing, except as it was more or less pretty in colour and form. I never saw the mirror so held up to nature: but it is Mirror's work, not Man's. This absence of sentiment is peculiarly indicated by the feeble anger of the sky. Had it been wholly cloudless—burning down in one calm field of light behind the purple hills, all the rest of the landscape would have been gathered into unity by its repose; and for the sleeping girl we should have feared no other disturbance than the bleating of the

favourite of her flock, who has returned to seek her—his companions wandering forgetful: but now she will be comfortlessly waked by hailstorm in another quarter of an hour: and yet there is no majesty in the clouds, nor any grand incumbency of them on the hills; they are but a dash of mist, gusty and disagreeable enough—in no otherwise to be dreaded; highly un-divine clouds—incognizant of Olympus—what have they to do here upon the hill thrones—*κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι.*

Historical landscape it is, unquestionably; meteorological also; poetical—by no means: yet precious, in its patient way: and, as a wonder of toil and delicate handling, unimpeachable. There is no such subtle and precise work on any other canvas here. The chesnut-trees are like a finished design of Dürer's; every leaf a study: the poplar trunks and boughs drawn with an unexampled exquisiteness of texture and curve. And if it does not touch you at first, stay by it a little—look well at the cottage among the meadows—think of all that this Italian life might be among these sacred hills, and of what Italian life has been, and yet is, in spite of silver crosses on the breast, and how far it is your fault and mine that this is so: and the picture may be serviceable to you in quite other ways than by pleasing your eyes with purple and gold.

POSTSCRIPT

It is one of the most difficult and painful duties which I have to perform in these Notes, to guard the public against supposing that works executed under circumstances accidentally unfavourable, are characteristic of a school, without at the same time hurting the artist's feelings deeply, just when all discouragement is most dangerous to him. I cannot, in justice

to the Pre-Raphaelite school, allow Mr Windus' picture—he being one of its chief leaders—to be looked upon as an example of what that school may achieve; but I trust that he will accept the assurance of my deep respect for his genius, and of my conviction that, with returning strength, he may one day take highest rank among masters of expression.

By inadvertency, I omitted, in the arrangement of these detached notes, the reference made to Mr Campbell's wonderful and all but perfect study, 'Our Village Clockmaker' (14), full of various power; but perhaps challenging difficulties of detail too manifestly: and to Mr Calderon's 'Lost and Found' (634), which, if the face of the mother had been but a little more beautiful, would have been one of the most touching, as it is one of the most able, pictures of the year.

I cannot criticize my friend Mr Watts' picture, 'Isabella' (438): it is full of beauty and thoughtfulness. I have no doubt that he knows its faults better than I do; and they are so slight that the public ought not to see them, but to admire it with all their hearts.

WATER COLOUR SOCIETIES

A somewhat singular circumstance has taken place this year, in the choice of their principal or masterpiece by two important societies of English artists.

The Society of British Artists placed, as the central attraction of their rooms, an illustration of Shakespeare [1]. The New Water Colour Society honoured with a similarly central position an illustration of Tennyson [2].

Duly allowing for privileges of seniority and presidentship, it would not be just towards either body of artists, if we supposed that the places assigned to these works of art were entirely trustworthy indications of the estimate formed of them. But whether promoted by law, by courtesy, or by admiration, those pictures stood forth to the English—and more than the English, public—as in some central or typical way exponents of the power of the two societies; and foreigners, at least, would be justified in concluding that the sanction given by two important bodies of English painters to these readings of the greatest dead, and greatest living, English poets, indicated with some truth the measure of general understanding of poetry in the artist mind of the country; and

[1] No. 53. 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark'. (F. Y. Hurlstone.)

[2] No. 212. 'A Dream of Fair Women'. (E. H. Corbould.) The illustrations of Shakespeare by Mr Gilbert, which occupy a conspicuous position (on each side of Mr Burton's centre piece) in the rooms of the Old Water Colour Society, curiously involve that society also in a parallel manifestation of opinion.

perhaps also (as the appeal to public judgment was made so frankly) something of the public mind of this country on the same matter.

I am not going to criticize those pictures. If the reader is not of my mind about them, I should not have any hope of being able to make him so—nor even any wish to make him so. If he *is* of my mind about them, he will understand why they should have set me thinking—not on the whole pleasurably—of the course and probable prospects of the curious group of English Personages to whom art now addresses itself. For it would not be difficult to show, if necessary, that these two works do verily express the final and entirely typical issue of the most popular modern views on the subject of poetry in general: and more than this, there is a certain typical character even in the hero and heroines of the pictures—the 'Hamlet' not unworthily representing what is popularly considered as Philosophy; the 'Jephthah's Daughter' what is popularly accepted as Piety; and the 'Cleopatra' what is popularly displayed as Splendour.

Or, in a nearer and narrower view, these pictures contain a concentrated expression of the character which distinguishes a modern English exhibition of paintings from every other that has yet been, or is likely to be. Bad painting is to be found in abundance everywhere, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our weakness; foolish painting in greater abundance still, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our imbecility; more or less meritorious painting, at least in all principal French and German schools, as well as in ours, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our merit: but purely and wholly vulgar painting is not to be found developing itself elsewhere with the same naïveté as among the English, and we *do* distinguish ourselves by our vulgarity. So, at least, it appears to me. As I have just said, I do not wish to argue with any one who disputes the fact, but to

trace thence one or two conclusions with those who admit it.

What vulgarity is, whether in manners, acts, or conceptions, most well-educated persons understand; but what it consists in, or arises from, is a more difficult question. I believe that on strict analysis it will be found definable as 'the habit of mind and act resulting from the prolonged combination of insensibility with insincerity'[1]: and I think the special manifestation of it among artists has resulted, in the first place, from the withdrawal of all right, and therefore all softening or animating, motive for their work; and, in the second place, from the habit of assuming, or striving by rule to express, feelings which did not, and could not, arise out of their work under such conditions.

I say first, by the withdrawal of all softening or animating motive, and chiefly by the loss of belief in the spiritual world. Art has never shown, in any corner of the earth, a condition of advancing strength but under this influence. I do not say, observe, influence of 'religion', but merely of a belief in some invisible power—god or goddess, fury or fate, saint or demon. Where such belief existed, however sunk or distorted, progressive art has been possible, otherwise impossible.

[1] It would be more accurate to say 'constitutional insensibility'; for people are born vulgar, or not vulgar, irrevocably. An apparent insensibility may often be caused by one strong feeling quenching or conquering another; and this to the extent of involving the person in all kinds of cruelty and crime—yet, Borgia, or Ezzelin, lady and knight still; while the born clown is dead in all sensation and capacity of thought, whatever his acts or life may be.

Cloten, in *Cymbeline*, is the most perfect study of pure vulgarity which I know in literature; Perdita, in *Winter's Tale*, the most perfect study of its opposite (irrespective of such higher virtue or intellect as we have in Desdemona or Portia). Perdita's exquisite openness, joined with as exquisite sensitiveness, constitute the precise opposite of the apathetic insincerity which, I believe, is the essence of vulgarity.

The distortion of the belief, its contraction or its incoherence, contract or compress the resultant art; still the art is evermore of another and mightier race than the art of materialism. Be so much of a Pythagorean as to believe in something awful and impenetrable connected with beans, and forthwith you are not weaker, but stronger, than your kitchenmaid, who perceives in them only an adaptability to being boiled. Be so much of an Egyptian as to believe that some god made hawks, and bears up their wings for them on the wind, and looks for ever through the fierce light of their eyes, that therefore it is not good to slay hawks; and some day you may be able to paint a hawk quite otherwise than will be possible to you by any persistency in slaughter or dissection, or help of any quantity of stuffing and glass beads in thorax or eye-socket. Be so much of a Jew as to believe that there is a great Spirit who makes the tempests his true messengers, and the flaming fire his true servant, and lays the beams of his chambers upon the unshrinking sea and you will paint the cloud, and the fire, and the wave, otherwise, and on the whole better, than in any state of modern enlightenment as to the composition of caloric or protoxide of hydrogen. Or, finally, be so much of a human creature as to care about the heart and history of fellow-creatures, and to take so much concern with the facts of human life going on around you as shall make your art in some sort compassionate, exhortant, or communicative: and useful to any one coming after you, either as a record of what was done among men in your day, or as a testimony of what you felt or knew concerning them and their misdoings or undoings: and this love and dwelling in the spirits of other creatures will give a glory to your work quite unattainable by observance of any proportions of arms and collar-bones hitherto stated by professors of Man-painting. All this is irrevocably so; and since, as a nation concerning itself

with art, we have wholly rejected these heathenish, Jewish, and other such beliefs; and have accepted, for things worshipful, absolutely nothing but pairs of ourselves; taking for exclusive idols, gods, or objects of veneration, the infinitesimal points of humanity, Mr and Mrs P., and the Misses and Master P.'s—out, I say, of this highly punctuated religion, which comes to its full stop and note of admiration after the family name, we shall get nothing—*can* get nothing, but such issues as we see here. The whole temper of former art was in some way reverential—had awe in it: no matter how carefully or conventionally the workman ruled and wrought the psalter page, he had every now and then a far away feeling that it was to be prayed out of—somebody would pray out of it some day—not entirely mechanically, nor by slip of bead. No matter how many madonnas he painted to order from the same outlines; the sense that the worst of them was sure, late or soon, to be looked up to through tears, could not but thrill through him as he arched the brow and animated the smile: nay, if he was but a poor armourer or enameller, the feeling that those chased traceries of cuish and helmet would be one day embossed in hot purple, deeper, perhaps through fault of his, would every now and then make his hammer smite with sterner, truer tone: awe and pity ruling over all his doings, such as now are unattainable. For Mr and Mrs P. are not in that sense awful—not in that sense pitiable: both—in another and deeper sense, but not in this.

Then the second source of the evil is the endeavour to assume the sentiment which we cannot possibly have. Let us accept our position; and good scientific, or diagrammatic, or politely personal and domestic art is still possible to us;—still may be made, if not majestic work, yet real work. There is use in a good geological diagram; and there is good riding in Rotten Row, to be seen any day between four and six; but if we

profess to paint ghosts, when we believe in no immortality;—or Iphigenias and daughters of Jephthah, when we believe in no Deity—this is what we come to: not but that even ghosts are indeed still to be seen, and Iphigenias found (though perhaps sacrificed not altogether to Diana) by sharpsighted persons—upon occasion.

It may be thought, I speak too seriously—or speak seriously in the wrong place—of this matter. I do not. The pictures are ludicrous enough. That which they signify is not ludicrous. And, as if to make us think out their signification fully, the Tennyson picture has a companion—an opposite at least—another illustration of English poetry by English art. The gate of Eden, with a Peri at it—an interesting scene to people who believe in Eden. We suppose ourselves to be rather nearer that gate—do not we?—than any of the old shepherds who saw ladders set to it in their dreams. And this is the aspect assumed by the gate, and the aspect of the angels in—or outside of it—upon such closer acquaintance. A 'strait gate' truly.

This being so, I cannot enter with any pleasure into examination of the works of the two Water Colour Societies this year. For in their very nature those two societies appeal to the insensitiveness and pretence of the public: insensitiveness, because no refined eye could bear with the glaring colours, and blotted or dashed forms, which are the staple of modern water-colour work; and pretence, because this system of painting is principally supported by the idle amateurs who concern themselves about art without being truly interested in it; and by pupils of the various water-colour masters; who enjoy being taught to sketch brilliantly in six lessons.

In spite of all the apparent exertion, and reflex of Pre-Raphaelite minuteness from the schools above them, the Water Colour Societies are in steady descent. They were founded first on a true and simple school

of broad light and shade—grey touched with golden colour on the lights. This, with clear and delicate washes for its transparent tones, was the method of all the earlier men; and the sincere love of nature which existed in the hearts of the first water colour masters—Girtin, Cousens, Robson, Copley Fielding, Cox, Prout, and De Wint—formed a true and progressive school, till Hunt, the greatest of all, perfected his art. Hunt and Cox alone are left of all that group, and their works in the Old Water Colour are the only ones which are now seriously worth looking at; for in the endeavour to employ new resources, to rival oil colour, and to display facility, mere method has superseded all feeling and all wholesome aim, and has itself become finally degraded. The sponge and handkerchief have destroyed water colour painting; and I believe there are now only two courses open to its younger students—either to 'hark back' at once to the old grey schools, and ground themselves again firmly on chiaroscuro studies with the flat grey wash, or to take William Hunt for their only master, and resolve that they will be able to paint a piece of leafage and fruit approximately well in his way before they try even the smallest piece of landscape. If they want to follow Turner, the first course is the only one. Steady grey and yellow for ten years, and lead pencil point all your life, or no 'Turnerism'. No 'dodge' will ever enable you otherwise to get round that corner. Those are the terms of the thing; we may accept or not as we choose, but there are no others. I name, however, a few of the works in the rooms of the two societies, which are at least indicative of power to do well, if the painters choose.

In the New Water Colour, Mr Warren's 'Lost in the Woods' (88) and 'Avenue' (228) are good instances of deceptive painting—scene-painting on a small scale, the treatment of the light through the leaf interstices being skilfully correspondent with

photographic effects. There is no refined work or feeling in them, but they are careful and ingenious; and their webs of leafage are pleasant fly-traps to draw public attention, which, perhaps, after receiving, Mr Warren may be able to justify by work better worthy of it.

In Mr Cooke's 'Hartland Point' (50) the sense of the low trickling of the rivulets of tide through infinite stones is very delightful; alternate rippling and resting of the confined, shallow, wandering water, that hardly will be at the trouble of getting down through the shingle, when it has to come up again over it soon. There are beautiful passages of atmosphere in this, as in all Mr Cooke's drawings this year. The companion studies of morning and evening, on the same cliff (2 and 6), suggest a pretty idea, but not quite successfully. The contrast is not carried far enough in minor details.

Mr Telbin's 'Dovedale' (208) is very delightful: on the whole it seems to me the sweetest and rightest thing in the room, but scattered in subject. A pretty place, certainly, but incoherent; neither dark, nor light, quiet, nor disquieted, tame, nor wild; but tenderly chaotic and insipid, suggestive, to me at least, of nothing but going on to see if nothing better is to be found. The sensation, perhaps, is increased by the oval shape—not a wise one for a landscape; where one wants to know accurately the difference between slope and vertical, as bearing much on the sublimities of some things, and the moral characters of others.

Lastly, Mr Rowbotham's 'East Cliff' (268) is an earnest and admirable study; strong in discipline, and full of fact, but hard. Neither the sweetest colours nor the subtlest forms have been seen—in fact, the heart of the cliff is not opened yet; but its muscular development is right. Yet it is costly drawing this, in attention, considering what water colour work is

usually; and the timbers and other *matériel* are well set in serviceable places. The painter must have felt himself braced after such work, and forwarded, in many ways.

In the rooms of the Old Water Colour Society, the first thing to be looked at should be Mr Hunt's marvellous fruit piece, No. 261. It seems to me almost the exquisitest I have ever seen, in the glowing grey of the bosses of the pine, and sweeping curves of its leaves. After that, David Cox's magnificent waterfall, at the upper end of the room— unsurpassable in its own broad way, and giving, in the foam, examples of execution as broad as Salvator's, and infinitely more subtle and lovely. Then, everything else of David Cox's in the room, especially 274. Next, Mr Newton's 'Snow Scene', 181, which is very good; but the good of it might be got in a daguerreotype as well, and Mr Newton can do better than a daguerreotype if he likes. We may well, however, look for his drawings round the room; all have something in them. The Inverness-shire moonlight (213) is especially good. And then follow round Mr Naftel (who has made swift advance this year), in the same way, beginning with the beautiful bit of retiring mountain and glittering fern, No. 183; and staying long at No. 44, a notable study of smooth-sculptured torrent bed and flushed hill side; look also at the rolling clouds in Mr Turner's 'Ben Cruachan' (48), which are the truest clouds in the whole room. Then, give as much time as you can to Mr Jackson's 'Bamborough' (170), and to Mr Smith's 'Chillon' (91); both of them quiet and sincere. Chillon, the least bit too red, but the purple towers in shade very good; and the gradations of light in the distance admirable. And it must not be through any importunity of mine if you stay longer; for the rest of the works here are, indeed, some very pretty, and some entertaining, and many very clever; but hardly, so far as I see, calculated either to form our taste or advance our knowledge.

6. Cherry-seller of Port l'Abbé, Brittany.

Very powerful and systematic in handling; right in form and gesture, and, up to its attempted point, in colour—only the beauty of girls and cherries missed. French girls, the sweetest tempered living creatures in the world, are not obliged to Monsieur Antigna for his representation of their countenances to the English, as they appear either here or in No. 5 opposite (also a clever work), while 'The Pet Squirrel' (4), though full of power, is entirely ignoble in its conception of girlhood. Respecting No. 1, it seems to me, we English might ask: 'Is it so rare a thing in France to hold your umbrella over somebody else in a shower as to induce the person so generously protected always to kiss the hem of your robe?' I carried a bag of nuts, as big as an ordinary coal-sack, a mile up hill, from hedge to home, for a tired Lucernoise old woman the other day, getting in return kind thanks indeed, but no pictorial effects of this kind.

57. The Toilet. (Edward Frère.)

This, with 59 and 60, is worthy of the painter, which is saying much; but there is no advance on previous effort. The 'Student', exhibited in 57, contained higher qualities of painting than any shown in the pictures of this year; and, which is a matter of much sorrow to me, I think the faces are on the whole less lovely than they were; quite as right and deep in expression, but some of their pure beauty lost: this is especially so in the face of the taller girl in 61.

I hear some complaints among the art-talk of the year, respecting the 'monotony' of Frère's pictures. But rustic life is not, it should be remembered, on the whole an exciting matter. The superiors of the poor rustics occasionally procure them some excitement —in the way of roof-burning, or starvation; or bayonet, instead of spade agriculture, with supply of richer manure to their fields than usual. But as Frère has seen it (and he paints only what he has seen), this cottage life, with its morning and evening prayer, and mid-day pottage, is a quiet business. You will not, I believe, get any disquietude from him. There is plenty brewing for us—subjects for historical painting of dramatic interest enough, on the horizon. For the present, we will give our sympathy to the 'Cut Finger', and to the tender little Florence, who binds it up, and be content.

91*a*. Bavarian Policemen, &c. (Louis Knaus.)

A most powerful work, full of entirely right expression, alike in feature and gesture. The distant figures at the opening of the wood are among the most wonderful pieces of complete drawing in a faint tone which I have ever seen; and there is handling in the faces throughout, which, though much inferior to Hogarth in colour, and in deep conception of feeling, approaches him in expressive skill (perhaps there is more resemblance to him in the companion picture, 91*c*, than in this). The painting is everywhere vigorous, but fails, as I have said, in colour, especially in the flesh. Gypsies have indeed dark skins, but they have bright life beneath them; here we have only gypsy mahogany, not gypsy blood. The dog and monkey, however, are perfect—I think, in unexaggerated truth of action and expression, better than Landseer's work. A most notable picture it seems to me, though not a profound one; but its superficial qualities are of the rarest kind. The other, 91*b*, is rather deeper—at least in the dignity

of the offended and hopeless wife—but it is coarse in colour.

147. A Country Fair in France. (C. Troyon.)

There is much cleverness in this picture, but it is painted on a totally false principle, which is doing so much mischief to the whole French school that I trust I may be pardoned for pointing it out very distinctly.

Chiaroscuro is a very noble subject of study; but it is not so noble a study as human nature: nor is it the subject which should mainly occupy our thoughts when we have human nature before us. Generally, we ought to see more in man or woman than that their forcheads come dark against the sky, or their petticoats and pantaloons white against it. If we see nothing but this, and think of nothing else in the company of our fellow-creatures but the depth of their shadows, we are assuredly in such insensitive state of mind as must render all true painting impossible to us. It may be the most important thing about a pollard willow that it comes greyly against a cloud, or gloomily out of a pool. But respecting a man, his greyness or opacity are not the principal facts which it is desirable to state of him. If you cannot see his human beauty, and have no sympathy with his mind, don't paint him. Go and paint logs, or stones, or weeds; you will not, indeed, paint even these at all supremely, for *their* best beauty is also in a sort human: nevertheless you will not insult them, as you do living creatures, by perceiving in them only opacity. Immense harm has been done in this matter by the popular misunderstanding of Rembrandt—for Rembrandt's strength is in rendering of human character, not in chiaroscuro. Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is always forced—generally false, and wholly vulgar: it is in all possible ways inferior, *as* chiaroscuro, to Correggio's, Titian's, Tintoret's, Veronese's, or Velasquez's. But in rendering

human character, such as he saw about him, Rembrandt is nearly equal to any of these men, and the real power of him is in his stern and steady touch on lip and brow—seen best in his lightest etchings—or in the lightest parts of the handling of his portraits, the head of the Jew in our own gallery being about as good and thorough work as it is possible to see of his. And when this is so, and the great qualities of character and of form are first secured—after them, and in due subordination to them—chiaroscuro and everything else will come rightly and gloriously; and they always do come in such order; no chiaroscuro ever was good, as such, which was not subordinate to character and to form; and all search after it as a first object ends in the loss of the thing itself so sought. One of our English painters, Constable, professed this pursuit in its simplicity. 'Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have chiaroscuro.' The sacrifice was accepted by the Fates, but the prayer denied. His pictures *had* nothing else; but they had *not* chiaroscuro.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

I see no distinctive reason for noting any of the works in the room at Suffolk Street (though many of them meritorious in their usual way), except only Mr Baxter's 'Red Riding Hood' (158), and Mr Roberts' 'Child at Play' (48), and 'Opinion of the Press' (173). Of these, the first showed, I thought, a great gift of painting, and great feeling for beauty, if the painter will not try to imitate the superficial qualities of Reynolds more than the sterling ones. The two works by Mr W. Roberts are interesting; not, indeed, for absolute perfection of attainment, but for their fidelity of light and shade; many pictures are more brilliant; but it is rare to find any so equally studied and harmoniously balanced in all parts; no bits of colour painted at inconsistent times, or in a changed temper, and therefore discordant. Few people would believe, for instance, that the strong orange touch on the girl's shoulder, in No. 48, was indeed the faithful representation of sunlight reflected at that angle from a purple dress; but so it is, and all the other pieces of effect are as earnestly watched and rendered [1], and the figure of the little girl very gracefully designed.

It may not be out of place, in noticing the sentiment of No. 173, which is well and graphically expressed, to warn young painters against attaching too much importance to press criticism as an influence on their fortunes. If sharp and telling, it is a disagreeable thing to look at, when just damp from the type; and it is certainly in an unpleasantly convenient form for

[1] Except the extreme distance, which is sunless.

one's friends to carry about in their pockets. But, ultimately, it is quite powerless, except so far as it concurs with general public opinion. I have never yet seen even a bad picture crushed by criticism, much less a good one. The sale of a given work may, indeed, be checked, or prevented; but so it may by a whisper, or a chance touch of the elbow. I have seen more real mischief and definite injury to property done in ten minutes by an idle coxcomb amusing his party, than could possibly be done by all the malice in type that could be got into the journals of a season. The printed malice only makes people look at the picture; the fool's jest makes them pass it. And though public taste is capricious enough—and erroneous enough—so as to make it very difficult to say how it is to be strongly wrought upon, yet let all young painters be assured of this—that *an absolutely good painting is always sure of sale*. If they choose to offend the public by wanton eccentricity, or easily avoidable error, they have only themselves to blame when the public loses its temper and passes their real merits without notice. The charity of artists is in condescending to please; and they deservedly suffer when they have it not. A great and good musician lowers his voice when he sings in a sick room, and raises it when he has to fill the theatre; he will sing lightly for the child, and simply for the uninstructed, but nobly and gloriously for all. So also a great painter can show his majesty in nothing more than by securing, in timely gentleness, empire over all hearts. It is only his petulance, or his pride—not his power—which will alienate the eyes of men: if Veronese rose now among us, or Correggio, there would be at first a wondering, attentive silence—not a murmur heard against them: and presently they would make the very streets ring for joy, and every lip laugh with acclamation; not because their essential power could be perceived by all—or by one in a thousand of all—but because, up to the point

of possible perception, it would be made lovable by all.

I repeat, therefore, to the young painter, in all distinctness and completeness, this assurance: Do your work well, and kindly, and no enemy can harm you. So soon as your picture deserves to be bought, it will be bought. If, indeed, you want to live by your art before you have learned it; or to sell what you know to be worthless, by catching the fancy of the purchaser; or to display your own dexterity, instead of truth of facts; or to preach to people, instead of pleasing them: in each and all of these cases you must take the chances of your speculation, or the penalty of your presumption. There are, indeed, some things you may preach without presumption; only, do not expect to be paid for your sermons: for people will pay richly for being pleased—scarcely, if at all, for being rebuked.

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